

OKLAHOMA

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2002

Today

Star Schools:

30

Highest Ranked
Public Schools in
Oklahoma

Plus:

10 Largest Universities
Sandy Garrett
Arts Education
OU's Favorite Professor
OSSM and...
Life as a Student Intern!

2002
EDUCATION

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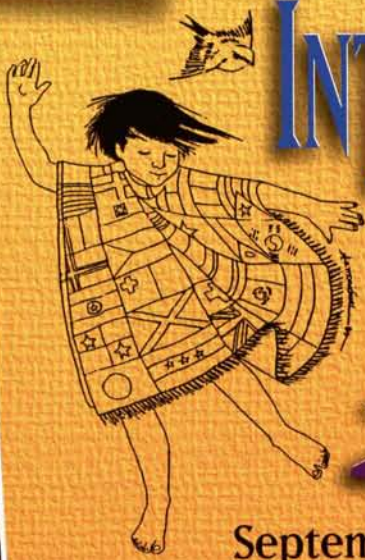
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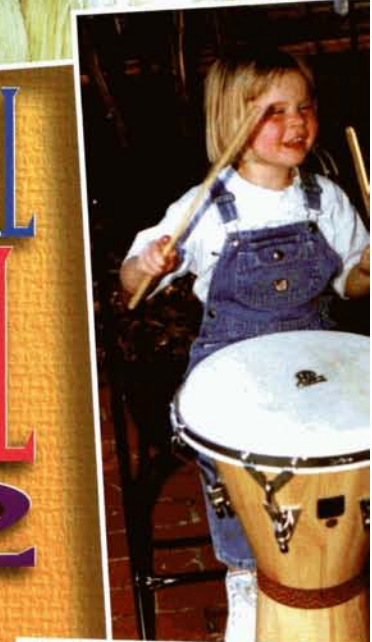
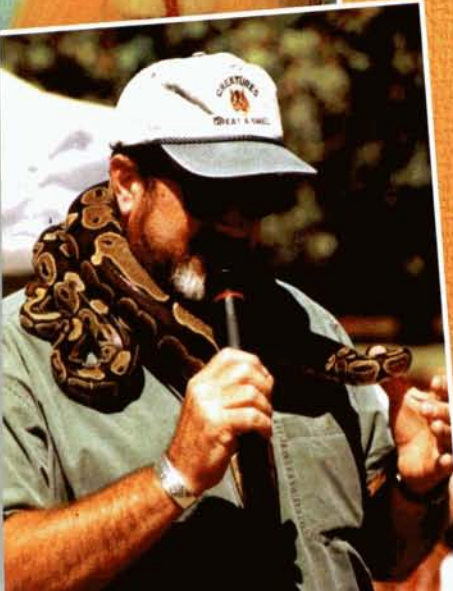
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- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1-1/2 cups cooked and drained black beans OR 1 16-ounce can black beans, drained
- 1-1/2 cups cooked and drained great northern beans OR 1 16-ounce can great northern beans, drained
- 1 cup diced tomatoes
- 3 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro
- 3 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped red onion
- 1/4 cup finely chopped jalapeno pepper
- 2 tablespoons chopped jalapeno pepper
- 2 large cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon EACH salt and sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper

In medium bowl, toss together beans, tomatoes, cilantro, vinegar, onion, jalapeno, garlic, and seasonings. Let stand at least one hour to allow flavors to develop. Refrigerate for longer storage. Heat heavy skillet over medium-high heat and brush lightly with the vegetable oil. Pan broil chops, turning occasionally, until cooked to medium doneness, about 15 minutes total. Remove chops from pan and serve immediately with Black & White Salsa.

Servings: 4
Preparation Time: 20 minutes
Cooking time: 15 minutes

Nutrient Information per Serving:
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Sodium: 454 mg
Protein: 58 g
Cholesterol: 140 mg
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OKLAHOMA

Today

SEPTEMBER • OCTOBER 2002
VOLUME 52 • NUMBER 6

FEATURES

Creative Classrooms 30

An Oklahoma City artist describes the role of arts education in Oklahoma classrooms against a backdrop of student painting, mixed media, and sculpture.
BY CHRISTINA PICKARD

Star Schools 34

If "API" doesn't ring a bell, chances are it soon will. A rundown of selected Oklahoma school luminaries that earned high marks in the Oklahoma State Department of Education's first Academic Performance Index.
BY SCOTT WIGTON

Guimond, Get Happy! 40

Poetry reigned in Ms. Corcoran's seventh grade English class. Here, she reflects on her favorite students and a philosophy of "meet 'em where they are."
BY STEFFIE CORCORAN

No Ordinary Kids 42

At the state-funded Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics, a demanding curriculum, talented students, and dedicated faculty spell a boarding school in which overachievement sets the standard.
BY HOLLY BAILEY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN JERNIGAN

The State of Education 2002 50

Funding, teacher retention, ESL: A report on Oklahoma's biggest public education concerns and successes.
BY CHAD LOVE

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This page: Students at the Cherokee Female Seminary in Tahlequah, courtesy of OU's Western History Collections. Cover: Seven-year-old Kilby, a Midwest City first grader, photographed by John Jernigan.

"If you want to write, the best advice you'll ever get is to read," says **Rachel Henry**. "The two go hand in hand." Henry, fifteen, is the author of this issue's poem, "Canoeing at Pennington Creek" (page 66), about a creek in southern Oklahoma, where her grandfather owns property. When not reading classic literature or "anything by Stephen King," she can be found listening to Hanson, writing, acting, practicing yoga, collecting masks, hiking, or playing piano. The Shawnee native is a freshman at Shawnee High School and one day hopes to be a professional stage actress or singer or pursue a career in the medical field. Henry is currently working on several short stories and three novels.



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"Star Schools" (page 30) is freelance writer **Scott Wigton**'s first feature-length article for *Oklahoma Today*. Wigton, a lifelong Tulsan who has worked for the *Sand Springs Leader* and *Tulsa World*, attended Booker T. Washington High School, one of the top API schools profiled in his piece. Wigton says, "At Washington, I really appreciated the diversity of the curriculum and student body and the genuine enthusiasm most students and faculty seemed to feel about education. I was also a starting member of the school's first-ever state championship soccer team (boast, boast)." When not working or chasing around his two year old, Wigton pursues his hobbies: travel, reading, creative writing, and listening to the Beatles.

Mike Harvey was named *Oklahoma Today*'s circulation and marketing director last spring. A Texas native with extensive magazine experience, Harvey has a long list of responsibilities at *Oklahoma Today*—subscriptions, newsstand sales, branding, promotions, and other reader-related matters. Says Harvey, "I arrived in Oklahoma in March 2002 not knowing exactly what to expect. What I discovered was a friendly and beautiful place to live and work. It would be tough to find a more fun, creative, and competent group of people to work with." Harvey and his wife Patti recently purchased a home in west Oklahoma City. The couple has four children.



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—Taft Elementary School mission statement

Editor's Letter

JOHN JERNIGAN



THE WONDER YEARS

EDUCATION 2002

The future of our children? It is conceivable that this is the most important issue *Oklahoma Today* has published in its forty-six-year history. Devoted exclusively to education in Oklahoma, the content aims to provide a snapshot of student life and the challenges facing parents and teachers as Oklahoma's public education enters the next century. Education is a perennial concern for global citizens; no doubt, *Oklahoma Today* readers, too, have strong feelings about its future. We'd love to hear from you. Type your thoughts into an email field or pencil them on old-fashioned letterhead. We value and look forward to your feedback.



I WAS A TAFT TIGER.

Our T-shirts were blue with stars and featured a ferocious tiger on the front. My favorite teacher was probably the colorful Mrs. Cameron, though I equally loved Mrs. Randolph, whom I once saw working at Wal-Mart after retirement, and Mrs. Dowers, renowned for her math abilities.

Whatever happened to young Miss Laura Daniels, I'll never know. She taught me in the third and fourth grades and left for a stint in the Dominican Republic the next year. She was from Boise City, and even now, every time I drive the Panhandle on the way to Colorado, I stop at the local Love's and ask about her. Sometimes the sales clerk knows the name, sometimes not.

Our PE teacher once told me that I had a pointy chin, a fact from which I've not since recovered. Today, I still wonder about Joe Jackson, who got his head stuck in a plastic chair the first day of second grade. Where is Grey Throckmorton, who at seven seemed the essence of literary aplomb? Was he smart and well read? Had he processed *Charlotte's Web*? Or did his name just lend a tweedy, intellectual air to his small self?

In between two different yellow—and ultimately stolen—Mongoose bicycles, I walked to and from Taft from kindergarten through sixth grade, most often with my friend Candice Austry. On those walks, she and I conjured up an elaborate relationship with Witchypoo, an oracle who lived in a row of hedges near the intersection of Wabash Avenue and Sequoyah Drive, one block equidistant from each of our homes. Though there is precious little I would willingly go back in time for, I still yearn for those seemingly endless forays home. The possibility and mystery of Witchypoo still lurk in my mind twenty-five years later.

Although the student interns at *Oklahoma Today* probably consider me one step toward ancient, I am thirty-two years old, which roughly puts me at Taft Elementary School between the mid-Seventies and early Eighties. Have things changed so much? Of course, and not at all.

Improved and diverse opportunities for women in the workplace have created a drought in the number of teachers, a field characterized by low pay, high stress, and immeasurable dividends. Parents from Seattle to Miami rightfully fear for their children's safety and despair at the thought of them walking home alone. Technology, too, has transformed from a lead pencil and a Big Chief tablet to a handheld Palm.

Unchanged is the profound impact these important school years will have on the individual child. Whether with a parent instructor, at a private parochial, or at the public school down the street, all children require the same things in order to positively thrive: focused, one-on-one attention, an expectation to do well, and a recognition of their place within a group. Humans—teenagers, too—have a deep and uncomplicated need to belong. For a popular kid, a punk, a poet, a poor kid, a dismissed kid, acknowledgement means everything.

Above all, let's give our children the tools, the judgment, and the wherewithal to think for themselves. Let's set our kids up to win, and not stopping there, let's create situations where they can find their places in the world. We were all kids once. You may be one right now. Isn't there a tiger in all of us?

Laura McCune
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"Learning is a result of listening, which in turn leads to even better listening and attentiveness to the other person." —Alice Miller

FeedBack

42 Strong

I moved to this state a year and a few months ago and have been to forty-two of the forty-five places listed in "45 Places Every Oklahoman Should Visit" (July/August 2002). I tend to take visitors from home, Michigan's Upper Peninsula, to forty-three, the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, mostly because that is a setting that cannot be found elsewhere.

I was going to suggest the Fort Reno Cemetery as my 46th place, but then I saw it covered in ten, which includes Fort Reno. Instead, I will say Wheelock Academy near Millerton in McCurtain County as my 46th place. Wheelock features Oklahoma's oldest church, built in 1847, and has a historic cemetery nearby.

Keep up the good work.

Trent Margrif
Executive Director, Preservation Oklahoma
OKLAHOMA CITY



Tough Enough

Hello, my name is Amos Earl. I'm a Yorkshire terrier and live near Broken Bow about fifteen miles from the lake. I just spent time last week camping with my family in one of the primitive campsites. We caught lots of nice fish and did some boating. I can't drive, but I like to ride.

I was just looking at the July/August 2002 issue of *Oklahoma Today* at the "Animal Magnetism" section in the Editor's Letter. I just wanted you to have a picture of

me. I'm an Okie through and through and love all that eastern Oklahoma has to offer. I love riding horses, boating, and camping. And I'm really a lot tougher than I look.

Amos Earl
BROKEN BOW

Modern-Day Adventurers

I especially enjoyed sharing "45 Places Every Oklahoman Should Visit" with my husband; we enjoy finding new places to see in Oklahoma. As native Oklahomans who did come back home, we are seeing as much of Oklahoma as we can and love doing it.

Sue Foutch
OKLAHOMA CITY

The Lure of the Lure

First of all, let me thank you for the great job your magazine did on the "45 Places Every Oklahoman Should Visit." We were blessed to be listed in three instances with Turner Falls, Arbuckle Mountains, and Chickasaw National Recreation Area. (It's in Sulphur but still close enough to us that we use it in tourism.)

In the Editor's Letter, you asked what the 46th place might be. Without a doubt, it is the Blue River Hunting and Fishing Area. As a single parent of a fifteen year old, I have an easy time finding activities we both enjoy, as long as hunting and fishing are involved. We never pass up the chance to spend a weekend camping at Blue River.

Located just northeast of Tishomingo, Blue River is one of the most popular winter-time trout fishing locations in the state. On weekends, the area is filled with many retirees and others who wish to catch a few fish while enjoying the great scenery.

I have traveled the state as a sales rep and have enjoyed many of the sites listed in your top forty-five, but to me, none beats the lure of the Blue River area.

While I am the executive director of the Davis Chamber of Commerce and would

never want to take away from the tourist locales in my area, when I get time off, you will find me heading to Blue River. Thanks for the great story. I enjoyed it a lot.

Brad Black
DAVIS

Another Man's Treasure

Here is my entry for the *Oklahoma Today* magazine's informal reader survey for the 46th place. There is a little store on the south side of Oklahoma City that probably qualifies for the term "junk shop." It is a square, cinder-block building situated in a residential area.

Once you go in the front door, the place is crammed floor to ceiling—and wall to wall—with rocks and all other sorts of treasures from the natural world. You can talk to the owner, and he will take you out back and dig under the deep piles of rocks that he has squirreled away out there. It is a fascinating place to visit. The name of the business is Arrowhead Rock & Lapidary Supplies.

Neil Garrison
YUKON

Fort Fallacy

I received the most recent issue of *Oklahoma Today* (July/August 2002) with my usual enthusiasm and pride. Overall, the issue measured up to my expectations with a couple of exceptions.

The article "45 Places Every Oklahoman Should Visit" had some serious misstatements and omissions. I noted the section on Fort Gibson, Fort Reno, Fort Towson, and Fort Cobb which summed up the military forts in the state. Although each site is a treasure of its own, none compares to the Fort Sill National Historic Landmark that you omitted. Fort Cobb has no extant structures, and Fort Towson consists strictly of foundations. Fort Reno is composed of a random selection of buildings from different time periods, and Fort Gibson is described

as having "...more standing buildings than any other Oklahoma fort."

The omission of the Fort Sill National Historic Landmark, particularly in comparison to the level of preservation seen at the other forts, was nothing short of amazing.

Towana Spivey
Executive Director, Fort Sill Museum
FORT SILL

Blooming Beauties

My favorite place in Oklahoma is right here close to home. Honor Heights Park in Muskogee is without a doubt beautiful year-round. Is it prettiest during April, when the azaleas peak, but I'm partial to the C. Clay Harrell Memorial Arboretum any time of year. Right in the middle of the grove sits a bench; you can sit there and simply feel the quiet and restfulness wash over you.

I like the tulips, too. When they bloom, the colors are bright and compete with the azaleas for attention. At Christmas, thousands of lights are strung to imitate the flowers in bloom and other fun holiday scenes. Absolutely, the 46th place every Oklahoman should see would have to be Honor Heights Park in Muskogee.

Wren Stratton
MUSKOGEE

You Can Go Home Again

As a native Oklahoman now transplanted to southern Arizona, I can unequivocally say that the 46th place Oklahomans should visit is their hometown. No matter how old you are or how long you may have been gone, nothing compares to going home again.

In my case, it's Alva. Although my life has drastically changed and brought me to

the Arizona/Mexico border, I can always go home to a small town that never changes, where people still remember when I was a toddler. I enjoy walking the town square, where small-town values are still important and where you can still leave your doors unlocked and be worry-free almost all of the time. No matter how the world may change around me, it's comforting to know Alva will always be a welcoming destination.

On a footnote, although living in the desert has been a great experience, I love reading *Oklahoma Today*. It's like getting a little piece of home in the mail. Thanks, and keep up the good work.

Denise Dunnigan
RIO RICO, ARIZONA

Rodeee—Oh No!

I just reviewed your July/August issue. On page 20, "Broncs or Bust," the line for the middle small photo says, "Riders head out of the gate for some ropin' action." Please note that the event is steer wrestling, and no roping is involved. Thanks for a wonderful magazine.

Donna Craven
MANNFORD

No Español

In your feature on newspapers across the state, you neglected to mention any of the many fine newspapers in Spanish that are published in Oklahoma. One award-winner is *Hispano de Tulsa*, the first Spanish-language paper in Tulsa. They have a crack team of reporters, photographers, and graphic artists that won them national recognition this year at the Fourteenth Annual Hispanic Print Awards.

They won four awards, including three first places: Outstanding Business Article, Outstanding Section Design, and Most Improved Publication in its category. *Hispano de Tulsa* does a great job of keeping the Spanish-speaking community informed. We are proud to have them in town.

Sara E. Martinez
Coordinator, Hispanic Resource Center
TULSA

Happy Days

It is because of your excellent magazine that my family and I have just returned from our two-week vacation in the state of Oklahoma. We had a great time. We enjoyed not only the State Capitol but also such places as Tahlequah, Bartlesville, Enid, Woodward, Lawton, and Anadarko. We spent an especially happy time in Cheyenne. Thank you for a wonderful magazine. It will always remind us of the happy time spent in Oklahoma.

David Sutcliffe
WILLINGTON, ENGLAND

Correction: In "Fit to Print" (July/August 2002), factchecking sources indicated that the Muchmore family had owned the Ponca City News since 1919. In fact, Ponca City oil man Lew Wentz owned the paper until his death in the 1940s. The Muchmores then bought the newspaper from the Wentz estate.

Oklahoma Today welcomes the views of readers. Letters are subject to editing and must include name, address, and a daytime phone number. Send letters to: *Oklahoma Today*, Attn: Editor, P.O. Box 53384, Oklahoma City, OK 73152 or fax to (405) 522-4588. Address electronic mail to letters@oklahomatoday.com.

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AN OKLAHOMA TODAY PHOTO CONTEST

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Mail photos to *Oklahoma Today*, Attention: "Pet Traveler," P.O. Box 53384, Oklahoma City, OK 73152, or editorial@oklahomatoday.com. Photos must be received by Thursday, September 19, 2002.



COLLEGE DAYS

Virtual visits to the state's ten largest universities.

By Nicole Emmons



ROBERT TAYLOR

Sooners Born

Not only has the University of Oklahoma racked up twenty-two national athletic championships, it also has held the top slot among public universities in National Merit Scholar enrollment. "We are excited to have the highest academically ranked entering class at a public university in the state's history," says university president David Boren. Known for its programs in meteorology and petroleum engineering, OU's nineteen colleges offer students a big campus experience. With campuses in Norman, Oklahoma City, and Tulsa, enrollment totals approximately 28,000. Approximately \$70 per credit hour. (405) 325-0311 or ou.edu.



Multicultural Matriculation

Located in Comanche country, Lawton's Cameron University has grown from a small community college into a respected university with associate's, bachelor's, and master's degree programs. Since its inception in 1908, Cameron has evolved into a competitive center of technology with a recently donated \$7 million computer—one of six recipients nationwide—from Wal-Mart and NCR Corporation. \$76.55 per credit hour. (580) 581-2200 or cameron.edu.



Southern Charm

Called "the campus of a thousand magnolias," Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant was originally a two-year teacher training school. Nowadays, this public regional university excels in teacher education as well as aviation, arts and sciences, and business. Today, some 4,000 students flock to the beautiful campus with its top-rated programs in occupational safety and music and theater. \$56.05 per credit hour. (580) 745-2000 or sosu.edu.



Going for the Golden

The University of Tulsa, with more than a hundred undergraduate degrees, is one of the Presbyterian Church's largest doctoral degree-granting universities in the United States. TU was established in Muskogee in 1882 as the Presbyterian School for Indian Girls and later moved to Tulsa in 1907. Today, with approximately 4,000 students, the university is best known for its engineering, computer security, psychology, and law programs. \$535 per credit hour. (918) 631-2000 or utulsa.edu.



Education Central

In Edmond, the University of Central Oklahoma offers its 15,000 students eighty-eight degrees, including a rare master's degree in forensic sciences. Also in its catalog: a program in funeral sciences and the only professional golf management degree in six states. \$56.05 per credit hour. (405) 341-2980 or ucok.edu.



Leadership Oklahoma

East Central University must be doing something right: Former Oklahoma governors Robert S. Kerr and George Nigh both graduated from here. ECU's Ada campus, brimming with 4,200 students, has one of the few successful cartography departments in the nation. \$56.05 per credit hour. (580) 332-8000 or ecok.edu.



Southwestern Flair

Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford boasts thirteen nationally accredited programs and offers its 5,000 students bachelor's and master's degrees and a doctorate of pharmacy. \$56.05 per credit hour. (580) 772-6611 or swosu.edu.



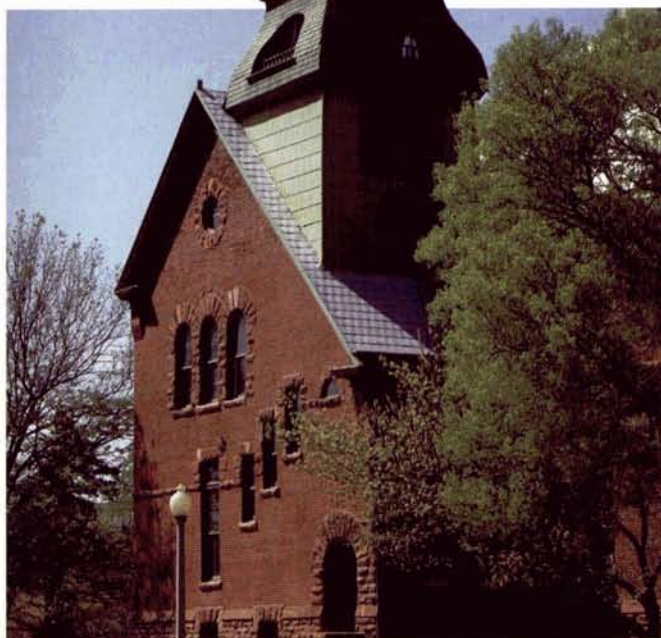
Roberts' Rules of Order

Started by Oral Roberts in 1963 and now led by his son Dr. Richard L. Roberts, Oral Roberts University enrolled 5,389 students in sixty-five undergraduate and twelve postgraduate degree programs last year. This private Tulsa university specializes in business, education, and theology. Its engineering department offers a hard-to-find airplane construction program. \$525 per credit hour. (918) 495-6161 or oru.edu.



Native Students

Established in 1846 as the Cherokee National Female Seminary, Northeastern State University's main campus is in Tahlequah, the heart of the Cherokee Nation. With branches in Muskogee and Broken Arrow, this diverse university of 8,900 students offers the only doctorate of optometry in the state. \$56.05 per credit hour. (918) 456-5511 or nsuok.edu.



Wanna Be a Cowboy?

Oklahoma State University, the safest campus in the Big 12 according to FBI statistics, was also called the "best college value in America" in the 1999 edition of the *Student Guide to America's 100 Best College Buys*. The school—known for its agriculture, engineering, and sensor technology programs—offers many undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees, professional degrees in osteopathic and veterinary medicine, and leads the state in doctoral degrees granted. OSU is one of the top athletic titleholders in the nation with forty-three national championships. With campuses in Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Okmulgee, and the main campus in Stillwater, the university is attended by 28,000 students. \$70 per credit hour. (405) 744-5000 or osu.okstate.edu.

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"The debris field and the dust bring back memories."—Oklahoma City fire chief Gary Marrs in the *Daily Oklahoman*, September 12, 2001

September Touchdowns

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Celebrate Be Kind to Editors and Writers Month by visiting the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History's exhibit <i>Flash: The AP Covers the World</i>. Through October 27.	2 On your Labor Day break, peruse the work of more than 260 artisans at Arts Festival Oklahoma at Oklahoma City Community College. Free admission.		4 Picture this. Swing by the Cherokee National Museum in Tahlequah and view David Fitzgerald's photography exhibit. You can also snag the book, <i>Cherokee</i>, that includes his photographs.	5 Brush up on your golf game today. Starting tomorrow, the Williams LPGA Championship takes over the links at the Tulsa Country Club. Fore!		7 A gala of growing gurus. Plant yourself at the Oklahoma City Zoo's Garden Gala, where zoo gardeners and local gardening organizations offer displays and demonstrations.
8 On National Grandparents Day, take Gram and Gramps to Go for Baroque, a classical outdoor concert at Lion's Park in Norman. Admission is free.	9 What's cookin', good lookin'? Visit your local diner or Mom's house to savor National Biscuits and Gravy Week. Don't give a thought to cholesterol or calories.	10 Become a card-carrying member. Check out <i>Invisible Man</i>, now in its fiftieth year, by Oklahoma City native Ralph Ellison and celebrate Library Card Sign Up Month.	11 Give your local fire, police, and military workers encouragement on this day of remembrance.	12 Rush the land in Enid and join the first day of the Cherokee Strip Celebration. The fun includes arts and crafts, live music, an outdoor movie, and Indian dancers. Through Saturday.	13 Beware black cats and broken mirrors. Today is Friday the Thirteenth. 	14 What is a calf fry? Learn the answer at Vinita's Big Country Weekend, where 2,000 pounds of the delicacy will be served.
15 Stage Door Theatre's <i>The Man Who Came to Dinner</i> is sure to make you laugh. Check out this production in Yukon. Through September 21.	16 Artists Christina Pickard and Robin Orbach Starke's abstract paintings and sculptures are on display at Oklahoma City University's Norick Art Center. Through October 11.	17 Add some pizzazz with some jazz. Head over to the Gilcrease Museum of Art for Jazz Night. Every third Tuesday of the month. 	19 Come on, baby! "The Twist" by Chubby Checker hit number one on the charts today in 1960. Jump and give your way to a local dance club. 	20 Here's looking at your art, kid. OU Professor Emeritus George Bogart displays his artwork at the Untitled Gallery in Oklahoma City. Through November 2. 		
22 Catch some rays and see some art on this last day of the outdoor Ponca City Fine Arts Festival. Admission is free. Pay a visit to the Marland Mansion while in town. 	23 Forego halter tops and short shorts—buy some sweaters. Autumn officially begins today. 	24 Needle this: Check out the fine art of Native American beadwork at the Museum of the Great Plains in Lawton. On display through October 26. 	25 Support Oklahoma pop stars so they don't fall victim to National One-Hit Wonder Day. The Hanson boys will thank you for it. 	27 Are the old Gene Autry flicks on your list of to-see movies? Wrangle yourself up and mosey on down to the Gene Autry Oklahoma Film & Music Festival in Gene Autry. Through Sunday.	28 For National Hunting and Fishing Day, check out Oklahoma's more than 1.6 million acres of public hunting land and 15 public fishing lakes. Bring the appropriate licenses.	
29 Grace the Tulsa Ballet with your presence for the last day of <i>Lady of the Camellias</i>, based on the novel by Alexandre Dumas. 						



WHO'S GOING TO RUN TOMORROW'S OIL AND GAS BUSINESS?

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continue to be the economic foundation of our state — providing jobs for thousands of Oklahomans well into the future.

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Letting them know how important the oil and natural gas industry has been to their lives in the past.

And making sure they understand our energy industry will be here for their future.

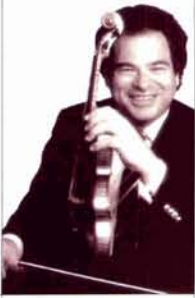
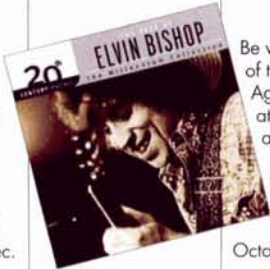


Oklahoma Energy Resources Board

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This message was funded voluntarily by Oklahoma's oil and natural gas producers & royalty owners.

October Colors

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Indulge your inner cookie monster and salute National Cookie Month with an all-natural peanut butter-chocolate chip from Big Sky Bread Company in Oklahoma City.	2 Tonight, do the loco-motion at the Tulsa State Fair's Oklahoma Stage for a dose of Seventies rockers Grand Funk Railroad.	3 ▶ Got \$150? Attend "An Evening with Joel Sartore" at Tulsa's F&M Bank, where the <i>National Geographic</i> photographer will share his work.		5 For two kinds of blue, catch that blue-eyed devil, Oklahoma City native Vince Gill, tonight at the Oklahoma International Bluegrass Festival in Guthrie.
6 Giddyup! The Grand National Morgan Horse Show starts today at State Fair Park in Oklahoma City. More than 1,000 Morgan horses compete in several events. Through October 13.	▲ 7 Give a little bit. Pick up a Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF collection box at any Pier 1 store this month and gather coins on Halloween. Proceeds go to UNICEF to combat polio.	8 It's not quite child labor, but this week, area students visit the Frederick Cotton Seminar, where they'll pick and gin cotton, all in the name of education. At the Pioneer Heritage Townsite Center.	9 You'll find hordes of gourds at Farmer Don's Pumpkin Patch in Lindsay, where farm animals, funnel cakes, hayrides, and a huge maze partner with the orange seasonal fruit. Through the 31st.	10 If genuine midways don't appeal, attend the Sequoyah Institute's production of <i>State Fair</i> at the Northeastern State University Center for Performing Arts in Tahlequah. 7:30 p.m.	11 Great walls of China! Enjoy them at the Porcelain Art Exhibit and Convention at the Biltmore Hotel in Oklahoma City. Through tomorrow.	12 Making beautiful music times two: Join the Oklahoma City Philharmonic for an evening of music featuring violinist Itzhak Perlman. <i>A Hero's Life</i>, 8 p.m. at the Civic Center. ▼
13 Be a master of disguise. Start your search for the perfect costume at Jeanne Flanigan's Costumes in Norman or the Tulsa Costume Workshop. Whatever look you desire, they can help you out.	14 Today, Columbus Day, voyage to Explore, a metaphysical gift shop in Oklahoma City. For a few bucks, buy a box of nag champa and smell the peace of mind.	15 ▶ Teen Read Week—the perfect opportunity for a classic, <i>The Outsiders</i>. Written by S.E. Hinton of Tulsa in 1967, the book offers up timeless adolescent angst.		17 They're a dime a dozen this month, but none are bigger than Oktoberfest at River West Festival Park in Tulsa. This evening at 5 p.m. kicks off four days of German food and festivities.	18 Could <i>Antiques Roadshow</i> be far behind? Splurge on an afternoon of junk therapy in Wilburton at the Fall Flea 'n' Tique downtown. Through Sunday.	
20 The list of goings-on at the Robbers Cave Fall Festival in Wilburton is long. The state's largest autumn festival started Friday and boasts crafters, vintage cars, and pony rides.	21 He fooled around and fell in love. Tulsa-born singer/songwriter Elvin Bishop celebrates the big 6-0 today, so load your favorite Bishop album in the CD tray. ▼	22 No time for a road trip to New Mexico? Stop at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum for <i>The Santa Fe Influence: Native American Art</i>.	23 Native treasures. If you enjoy Indian art, consider the Homecoming Art Show at the Cherokee Heritage Center in Tahlequah. Through December 31.		◀ 25 Lend an ear to one of the world's most treasured operas, <i>La Bohème</i>, at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center tonight at 8 p.m.	26 It's a lot of icing any way you look at it. Visit the Ford Center, where the Oklahoma City Blazers take to the home ice against the New Mexico Scorpions. 7:05 p.m.
27 Spend Mother-in-Law's Day at the Tulsa Fairgrounds <i>House Beautiful</i> show, and, in addition to the hundreds of exhibitors, catch a glimpse of <i>Trading Spaces</i>' Frank Bielec.		29 Be very afraid of the dark. It's <i>Agony After Dark</i> at Arcadia Lake, a horror-filled scarefest. (Sorry, too scary for the little ones.) Through October 31.	30 Hometown pride. At Price Tower Arts Center, enjoy a slice of community history with the center's exhibition featuring art and antiques collected in Bartlesville. Through January 5.	31 ▶ For a safe alternative to trick-or-treating, take the little ones to Fun-n-Games on Main in downtown Broken Arrow for candy and more: games, a petting zoo, and a pumpkin-painting contest. 6-8 p.m.		

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THE RANGE

True West

OU'S WESTERN HISTORY COLLECTIONS

IMAGINE PIECING TOGETHER THE SCRAPBOOK OF YOUR LIFE, GATHERING your photographs and letters in one place. Now imagine a scrapbook for the whole state, and you scratch the surface of the University of Oklahoma's Western History Collections.

In 2002, the Western History Collections—250,000 photos, 34 million historic manuscripts, and 60,000 volumes strong—celebrates seventy-five years of chronicling the American West and Oklahoma. The collection's primary purpose is academic research, but visitors are welcome to view exhibits or look up family history.

The biggest draw, curator Donald DeWitt says, are the photo archives. "The historic photos are magnetic," he says, noting that visitors spend hours browsing through selection books or purchasing black-and-white prints on-site. "More than just a history of the region, it is a history of the people who came here."

—Brooke Demetz

The Western History Collections is housed in Monnet Hall on the OU campus. (405) 325-3641; libraries.ou.edu/depts/westhistory. For its seventy-fifth anniversary, the University of Oklahoma Press is publishing a two-volume guide to the collections. (405) 325-2000 or oupress.com.

This undated photo shows teacher Lillie McKnight with her class at the Cache Creek Mission in early-day Oklahoma. The image is one of the many available at the Western History Collections, a division of the University of Oklahoma Libraries.



HOME WORK

CALLING ALL HOMESCHOOLERS

Homeschooling isn't about sleeping in and hanging out. For many Oklahomans, this education alternative offers one-on-one instruction, freedom from social pressures, and implementation of family morals. If you're taking your child's education into your own hands, look into these Internet resources:

Oklahoma State Department of Education: sde.state.ok.us

Oklahoma Home Educators Network: home.att.net/~ok-he

Home Educators' Resource Organization of Oklahoma (HERO): oklahoma-homeschooling.org

Home School Legal Defense Association: hsllda.org

Homeschool World: home-school.com

Homeschool Counsel: homeschoolcounsel.com

American Homeschool Association: americanhomeschoolassociation.org

—Brooke Demetz

LITERARY GEMS

Three of Oklahoma's Oldest University Journals

For all the plots, rhyme schemes, and tales that dart about in collegiate minds, there are literary journals to capture them. Below are three of Oklahoma's finest, recognized for their longevity and high quality.

Cimarron Review

Oklahoma State University's *Cimarron Review* has been publishing poetry, fiction, and nonfiction since 1967. Contributing to *Cimarron's* appeal and longevity are writers like Robert Olen Butler, Mark Doty, and Tess Gallagher. *Cimarron's* solid reputation has solidified with its recent listing in *Writer's Digest's* top fifty places to publish fiction in America and the addition of National Book Award winner Ai as poetry editor. \$24 a year. (405) 744-9476; cimarronreview.okstate.edu.

Nimrod

Nimrod has been a University of Tulsa centerpiece for forty-six years. "Quality is what we are after," says editor Francine Ringold of the biannual publication. "Unknowns are encouraged to submit their works, and established writers are proud to be placed within our covers." Begun as a student publication, *Nimrod* now exposes nearly two thousand readers to a broad spectrum of poetry, short fiction, and essays. \$17.50 a year, \$30 for two years. (918) 631-3080; utulsa.edu/nimrod.

World Literature Today

Begun by one-time University of Oklahoma modern languages chairman Roy Temple House as *Books Abroad* in the 1920s, *World Literature Today*, its title since 1976, has widened that focus to include sixty languages. In 2002, the Oklahoma Center for the Book honored *World Literature Today* with the Arrell Gibson Lifetime Achievement Award. \$40 a year, \$75 for two years. (405) 325-4531; ou.edu/worldlit.

—Heather Harkins

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- ◆ An afternoon at Jasmine Moran Children's Museum in Seminole
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- ◆ Signing up for a Fall Arts Institute workshop at Oklahoma Arts Institute



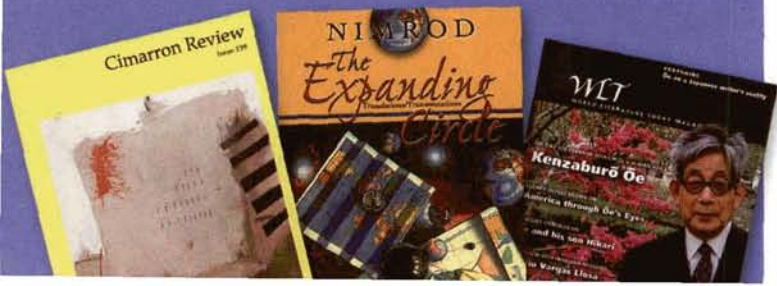
SEVEN OKLAHOMA COLLEGES MAKE U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT LIST

Oklahoma colleges are making the grade—literally. In *U.S. News and World Report's* "America's Best Colleges: 2002 Edition," seven Sooner State comprehensive colleges (undergraduate institutions with degree programs in the liberal arts and professional fields) were tops in the western region:

2. Oklahoma Baptist University (Shawnee)
7. Oklahoma Christian University (Oklahoma City)
12. Oklahoma Wesleyan University (Bartlesville)
25. St. Gregory's University (Shawnee)
26. University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (Chickasha)
31. Langston University (Langston)
33. Oklahoma Panhandle State University (Goodwell)

The *U.S. News and World Report* rankings derive from a combination of academic indicators in the areas of academic reputation, student selectivity, financial resources, retention, alumni giving, and faculty resources.

—Steffie Corcoran



September 6 & 7

Country Harvest Craft Show
Hutchins Memorial

September 13 & 14

Cherokee Strip Chili & BBQ Cook-Off
Wentz Camp

September 21 & 22

Fine Arts Festival
Ponca City Art Center

September 27 & 28

Standing Bear Pow Wow
Standing Bear Memorial Park

October 5 & 6

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WHIZ KIDS

Saxon Publishers Know Their Math

TALK ABOUT GOOD NEWS! FLORIDA Comprehensive Assessment Test scores just arrived. Our learning gains in math were 86 percent."

Dr. Stephanie Gall's recent email came as no surprise to Frank Wang, board chairman of Saxon Publishers. *The 2002 Saxon Report Card* contains pages of praise from teachers and administrators, messages suggesting that Saxon gets results. The report's data substantiates dramatically increasing test scores in math and phonics, the two subjects taught with Saxon textbooks.

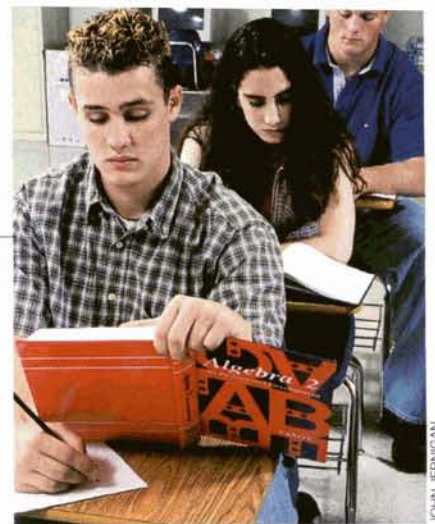
The company, started in 1980 in the

Norman home of retired Air Force lieutenant colonel and math instructor John Saxon, has been making waves in the textbook industry since 1982, when *Algebra I: An Incremental Development* was published.

Twenty years later, Saxon books are now in the classrooms of 25,000 schools in more than a hundred countries worldwide. Annual sales approach \$100 million. The company, headed by Wang and CEO Gerard Smith, employs 250 at its Norman headquarters.

Saxon Publishers was built on its math texts, and they continue to generate attention across the country. What's so different about Saxon math books? First, they are written in understandable language with no baffling jargon. Secondly, every new topic is introduced with plenty of review and lots of practice problems. John Saxon, who died in 1996, also wrote his books without chapters to emphasize connections among algebra topics.

Wynona Knopp, principal of Okeene Junior/Senior High School, has taught Saxon math for almost twenty years and worked with John Saxon as he developed later books.



"We use Saxon math from kindergarten through grade twelve. On the eighth-grade criterion-referenced test last year, every student passed, and 19 percent were classified as advanced."

Although math education will always be Saxon's backbone, the company is expanding into another of the three R's. A phonics curriculum for kindergartners through third grade has been available since 1996, and a reading program for grades four through eight is a future possibility.

—Carolyn Tharp

Saxon Publishers, 2600 John Saxon Boulevard in Norman. (800) 284-7019; saxonpublishers.com.

JIM ROBERSON & ASSOCIATES



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An estimated 3,000 students enroll in classes at City Arts Center each year. Included among them are these three students who attended a children's jewelry-making class last summer.

Finding Creativity

CITY ARTS CENTER CONNECTS PEOPLE TO ART

AN EMPTY EXPANSE OF DRAWING PAPER STRETCHES across a table. To the painter, it is an invitation to create. But for those who admire art from a distance, creativity appears mysterious, a magical process. At City Arts Center at State Fair Park in

Oklahoma City, everyday people of all ages move from observers to participants, entering the world of their own creativity.

City Arts traces its roots to 1981, when, building on programming established by the Kirkpatrick Foundation, the group formed as a nonprofit with a commitment to provide the community with quality, accessible, and affordable arts programming. City Arts works in tandem with its sister organization, Oklahoma Children's Theatre, sharing facilities and resources. The relationship provides a variety of arts education programming for adults and children of all ages, from daytime offerings for those with odd work hours to classes for kids out of school.

"When school's out, we have something going on so parents have a place to bring their kids. Our whole concept is creating something from nothing, to think outside the box, to think imaginatively," says Shoshana Wasserman, public relations director.

In an age of two-income families, City Arts and Oklahoma Children's Theatre camps provide a unique boon to parents seeking to enrich a child's experience in the arts while at the same time providing a caring, creative environment for children away from school. The center offers themed summer camps and, during the school year, fall, winter, and spring break classes.

HEATHER HARRIS

More scholars per dollar.

For the third time in five years, TU students won four out of four Barry M. Goldwater scholarships (only Duke and Cornell can top that). What's more, TU students won the only Marshall and Truman scholarships awarded in Oklahoma this year; and one scholar won fellowships from both the National Science Foundation and Department of Defense. Count the numbers. Compare tuitions.

And you'll see why TU is the place for exceptional scholars and unsurpassed value.



(From left) Marshall Scholar David McGrary; Truman Scholar Tina Tran; National Science Foundation and Department of Defense Fellow Stephen Magill; Goldwater Scholars Jon Novotny, Tracy Carlson, Bradley Skaggs and Jesse Keller.

Universities/Goldwater Awards since 1998. (Maximum: 4 per institution, per year)

University	# of Goldwater Scholars	2001-2002 Tuition & Fees*
Cornell	19	\$26,062
Duke	19	\$25,630
University of Tulsa	18	\$14,200
Princeton	18	\$26,160
University of Chicago	18	\$26,475

*Undergraduate tuition and fees from the 2002 Higher Education Directory



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The University of Tulsa is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.

A divorced mom, Chennelle Patton works for General Motors in Oklahoma City. With two kids, Disiree and Roshon, ages twelve and nine, Patton was looking for a unique summer camp experience. She found it at City Arts. "This was our first experience, and I'm sure it won't be our last," says Patton of the one-week session. "The kids really enjoyed the art camp. It gave them the chance to be artistic and at the same time creative."

In adult classes, City Arts focuses on four main areas: pottery, weaving, photography, and painting and drawing. Building on that core base allows City Arts the flexibility to experiment with classes in other media, like mosaic tiles, offered during the summer. If experimental programming works, it can be nurtured and developed, possibly adding another dimension to base program offerings.

Wasserman has been watching people learn at City Arts for years now. As people create art, she says, they also begin to gain insight into their own individuality. "To actually be able to walk away with something that makes them feel good about themselves expands people's ideas of what art is," she says.

Through a variety of up-close-and-personal artistic encounters, City Arts fulfills its mission of providing interactive arts experiences.

—Shauna Lawyer Struby

This fall, catch the exhibit Ezekiel's Horse, October 10-November 9, and at Oklahoma Children's Theatre, The Real Little Red Riding Hood, October 10-November 1. (405) 951-0000; cityartscenter.org or okchildrenstheatre.org.

Sixteen-year-old Rachel Stratemeir, a youth camp assistant at City Arts Center, helps out at a children's art class.



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Be a part of Oklahoma's Centennial celebration and celebrate the diversity of life in our great state!

**For more information contact:
The Hideaway Foundation**

P.O. Box 18355, Oklahoma City, OK 73154
405-525-5681

www.collage2000.com



"Even Noah got no salary for the first six months—partly on account of the weather and partly because he was learning navigation." —Mark Twain

Learnin', Not Earnin'

Oh, the Places You'll Go!

Now a twenty-five-year-old rising star at the *New York Times*, where she has written for the City section for more than two years, Kelly Crow started as an intern at *Oklahoma Today* in 1997. In December 1998, the Edmond native graduated from UCO with a degree in journalism and in August 1999 left the magazine for New York and a master's of science from Columbia University's journalism program. For Crow, we foresee great assignments and surely a Pulitzer or two.

Did You Say 'Unpaid'?

Some internships, including those at *Oklahoma Today*, offer no remuneration. For Idabel native Anne Schlesselman, a UCO journalism student, interning at the magazine and waiting tables at Newton's provided writing and research opportunities coupled with some pocket change. (Here, Anne models the "jeans on Fridays" corporate ethos.)

Turkey on Wheat

The occasional drudgery of internships can be found in errand-running. At *Oklahoma Today*, that might mean noon-hour trips to Subway during deadlines, but it also includes acting as a courier. There's nothing like a sunny face to hand-deliver that important letter.

Nonblondes Allowed

Contrary to this photo, *Oklahoma Today* interns don't have to be blonde, pretty, or female. Like most organizations, we prefer intelligence, organizational skills, initiative, and a genuine smile. At *Oklahoma Today*, we are open to interns of all backgrounds, college-educated or otherwise.

K NOW A STUDENT WHO'S GOT GREAT GRADES BUT NEEDS a little on-the-job experience? Instead of sending her off to Old Navy or Blockbuster, an internship might be just the ticket. There, students can play in the field of their dreams, make future connections, and see how it's really done. At *Oklahoma Today*, interns are vital to the editorial process. Only requirement? Intern candidates should have a serious interest in publishing, journalism, and Oklahoma.

—Louisa McCune

Growing Up

Perhaps the greatest advantage of an internship is learning how to work in a professional climate. By a combination of osmosis and careful study, interns learn how to manage information and effectively communicate with colleagues.

It's for You

"*Oklahoma Today* has taught me things that no classroom atmosphere could," says OU student Ryan Marie Mendenhall, a former intern and now editorial assistant at the magazine. An editorial internship, agrees Mendenhall, will quickly turn the most phone-phobic student into a savvy communicator.

Just the Facts, Ma'am

Interns who factcheck learn quickly how easy it is for writers to make mistakes. It is the rare article—even among the best reporters—that is entirely error-free. Says Kelly Crow of her internship: "I was glad to learn that even cow chip-throwing contests were to have all printable details factchecked."

Master of Your Destiny

Internship opportunities run the gamut. From air conditioning internships at OSU-Okmulgee to gubernatorial and federal legislative positions, many Oklahoma organizations have top-notch intern programs already in place.



JOHN JERNIGAN

GREEN THUMB 101

Oklahoma Master Gardener Program

CALL IT AN UNOFFICIAL MASTER'S DEGREE IN DIRTY fingernails: At least forty classroom hours of training on any subject that might arise from a humble pot of soil. If you've got the wherewithal to broaden your horticultural education, the Oklahoma Master Gardener Program will earn you official certification and the directive to go forth and volunteer. Pay, zero.

"We try to tell people it's not a degree, it's a job," says David Hillock, program coordinator. Masterminded by the Oklahoma State University-based Cooperative Extension Service to take the heat off overworked staff, the program trains volunteers in horticulture-related subjects and puts them on point to answer questions ranging from leaf blight to blossom drop.

After certification, master gardeners complete a lengthy internship. In Weatherford, interns researched pioneer-era plants for a landscape project surrounding a historical cabin site. In Tulsa, they designed an educational program for first through fourth graders, digging in to seed germination and the role of earthworms and insects in the garden.

Four thousand Oklahomans have earned master gardener certification since the program kicked off in 1978, with active programs in

twenty-five counties. Additionally, to keep their designation up to date, master gardeners must complete twenty hours of volunteer work and twenty hours of continued horticulture education annually.

All this sounds a bit intimidating to the novice green thumb, but Hillock assures that master gardeners are a mixed bunch. "Most of our participants don't know a great deal about horticulture, but they have an interest or desire to know more," he says. "Others like the volunteer aspect and simply want to do something to help their community."

Prospective masters are quizzed weekly and must pass a final exam with a score of seventy-five percent or better. "Not many have failed," Hillock says. "It's open-book."

—Mary Logan Wolf

For more information, contact your local county extension office. David Hillock, (405) 744-5158; home.okstate.edu/Okstate/dasn/hort/hortlahome.nsf/toc/Mastergardener.



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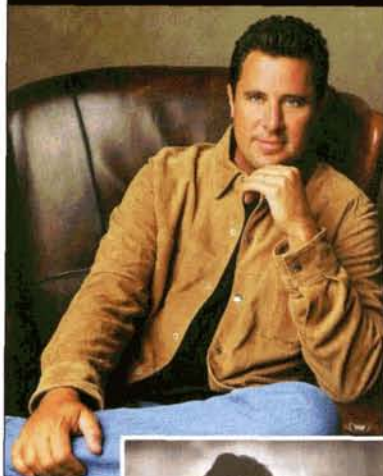
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THE OKT PROFILE

**Sandy
Garrett**



Stilwell native Sandy Garrett, a former first grade teacher, was the first woman elected to the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, a post she has held since 1991. Garrett was instrumental in implementing teacher reform through House Bill 1017 and has worked to improve student reading levels, enhance classroom technology, and make schools safer. She lives in Oklahoma City.

Q: What inspires you?

A: The optimism, creativity, and innocence of children inspire me every day. They are the future of our state and deserve every effort we can put forth.

Q: What is your best and worst habit?

A: My best and worst habit are the same—working too much.

Q: What would you change about yourself?

A: I need to quit expecting everyone to work as many hours as I do, and to not take it personally when people degrade the achievements of Oklahoma students or the efforts of educators.

Q: What is your favorite book?

A: *John Adams* by David McCullough.

Q: What is your favorite motto or quote?

A: *Labor Omnia Vincit*. The state's motto, "Labor Conquers All Things," is one of my favorites. I believe if you work hard enough, you can achieve your goals.

Q: What do you enjoy in your free time?

A: Reading, watching the news, and gardening.

Q: What is the biggest challenge facing Oklahoma public schools?

A: Recruiting, retaining, and rewarding quality teachers.

Q: Who was your favorite teacher?

A: Mrs. Wherry, whose top priority was to teach every student in her first grade class to read.

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PRIMAL FEARS

J. Rufus Fears in Action

DO YOU RECALL THE SCENE IN *INDIANA JONES and the Last Crusade* where the title character, an archaeology professor, struggles through a sea of eager students on the way to his office? In some ways, it is reminiscent of the first day of classes at Nielsen Hall at the University of Oklahoma. There, students gather to meet a real-life legend, Dr. J. Rufus Fears. Not so long ago, I was one of them.

Fears, who holds a PhD from Harvard, is a classics professor at the University of Oklahoma, where he has been named Professor of the Year three times in his twelve years there.

It takes one lecture to realize why. Fears can make a classroom of 250 students feel present in the historical moment he describes. Renowned for his ability to act out a fierce battle, Fears often uses students as victims of his feigned attacks, moments later reenacting a tender moment between Marc Antony and Cleopatra.

"Part of education," says Fears, "is a knowledge of history, not so much of facts, but the ability to think historically, to see history as offering lessons to the present."

Professor Fears' philosophy rests on the bedrock principle

of "absolute right and wrong," which he unabashedly promotes and preaches. Whether lecturing on Jesus or George Washington, he is always sure to return to his mainstay theme: freedom, which he calls the founding ideal of our nation.

"Dr. Fears lectures like no one else I've ever heard," says Kyle Harper, a former student. "He encourages us to really learn from history—both academically and morally—something other professors don't do."

At one time, if you wanted to listen to a Fears lecture, you had to line up with all the other Sooner student hopefuls. Fortunately, Fears' teachings are now available through The Teaching Company, which mass-produces lectures of distinguished scholars. Fears has recorded lectures on a number of topics, ranging from *History of Freedom* to his newest release, *Churchill*. Best of all, Fears' titanic presence is as tangible on tape as in person.

—Brian G. Hobbs

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Among J. Rufus Fears' courses available on tape and disc are *Churchill*, above, *Famous Romans*, *Famous Greeks*, and *History of Freedom*.

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A Corporate Case Study

UNDER INTEGRIS SPONSORSHIP, A SCHOOL IS ON THE MEND

DARK CLASSROOMS, SMELLY bathrooms, and floors that slanted at angles so extreme file cabinet drawers flew open on their own: Such conditions were the worm in the apple at Western Village Elementary School in north Oklahoma City. Until 1999, the prekindergarten through fifth grade school clung to the bottom rung of the Oklahoma City school district's academic performance ladder and was listed on the district's list of low-performing schools.

That year signified a healthy change, when Integris Health adopted Western Village as an enterprise school, investing time and money to improve the facility and providing hundreds of volunteer hours in afterschool reading and tutoring programs. In 2000, Integris bit down on a riskier venture by taking on Western Village as Oklahoma's first corporate-sponsored charter school.

A notion receiving mixed reviews across the nation, charter school legislation passed in Oklahoma in May 1999, allowing corporations, groups, and organizations to become full partners in the education process, even taking on the hiring, firing, bill-paying, and educational curriculum. A supporter of charter legisla-

tion, Superintendent of Public Instruction Sandy Garrett says she views such schools as laboratories for innovation. "Charter schools simply give parents another choice in our educational menu."

A large portion of Integris' sponsorship boils down to money. Now known as Western Village Academy, the school received \$1 million (a combination of fundraising, grants, and Integris funds) under the first year of Integris management, 2000-01, on top of the per-pupil allocation all schools receive from the department of education. So what's in it for Integris? Part of the rationale lies in the company's community-serving philosophy. "Community health has as much to do with housing, education, employment, and crime as it does with the absence of disease," says Stanley Hupfeld, Integris Health president and CEO.

In that vein, Integris supports programs

that offer job training for gang members, employee mentoring for at-risk schools, and in the Western Village neighborhood, a weekly mobile health clinic providing on-site medical care for residents.

"There is a misconception that charter schools are somehow elitist, but this couldn't be further from the truth," says Tobi Campbell. Campbell, a longtime employee in the Integris community development department, today serves as director of the academy and oversees all administrative tasks. "We serve the whole population, ninety-five percent of whom are minority. No charter schools are rich," she says.

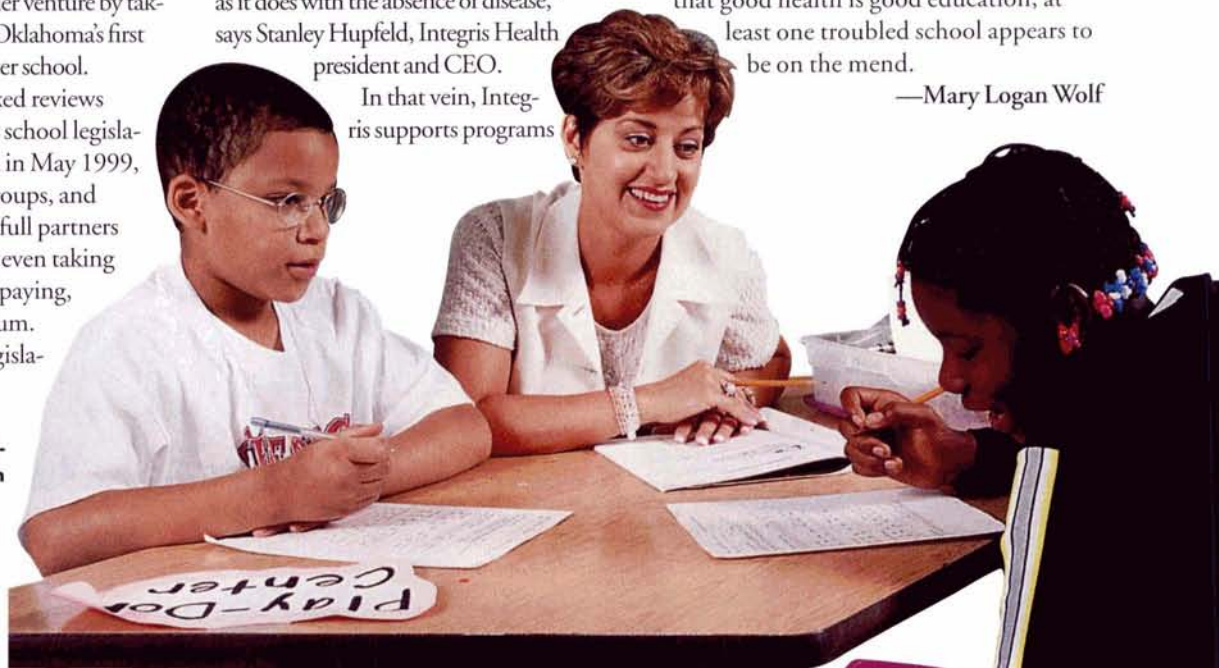
At Western Village Academy, the experiment appears to be working. First came a face-lift: fresh paint, new lighting, flooring, even reading lofts appealingly designed as castles and trees, all paid for by Integris. New teachers were hired and a new arts integration teaching method implemented. National educational research teams show that this method, which incorporates music, dance, writing, and visual arts into virtually every subject, is most effective for students in low-income areas.

The proof of the transformation at Western Village Academy lies in the statistics: Reading comprehension scores have more than doubled, from 25 percent reading at or above grade level to an impressive 56 percent in one year's time. Parental involvement is up, juvenile crime is down, the school is no longer considered low performing, and parents who opted to enroll their kids elsewhere are returning again to Western Village Academy.

Judging by the Integris philosophy that good health is good education, at least one troubled school appears to be on the mend.

—Mary Logan Wolf

Tobi Campbell, director of Western Village Academy, helps students with their assignments.







THERE IS NO DODGE BALL IN ART. NO WHISTLES. NO PAIN. NO staring at your shoes praying the other guy gets picked last. I have yet to encounter anyone for whom art was a painful and dreaded class. Sure, there were problems with three-point perspective, the tiny explosion in the kiln, the feelings of inadequacy exacerbated by the girl who drew horses perfectly and her male counterpart who could render the shiny curves of a Porsche 911 with his eyes closed. But in general, I remember art class as not only benign but welcoming and quietly comforting.

After polling family and friends, I found that my early artistic memories were not anomalous at all. They were matched by many fond recollections of smoothing out that very first pinch pot, learning to finger weave, painting at the easel, and that one child who sampled the paste like so much fine wine.

Whether we become doctors, lawyers, writers, or painters, we all possess more innate creativity than we acknowledge or even remember. It is evident in our memories from childhood and in the way we conduct ourselves at work and at play. From trouble-

COMMENTS: So much imagination!

BY CHRISTINA PICKARD

CREATIVE CLASSROOMS





From near left to right: *Untitled 10* by Nick Semtner of Oklahoma State University; An untitled photography piece by Hitomi Okmura, a University of Oklahoma senior; *They Call Him Bill* by Alexis Semtner, a recent graduate of the Classen School of Advanced Studies in Oklahoma City. Opposite: *Myth of European Superiority* by Anne Israel, another spring 2002 graduate of Classen SAS.



This column, from top: *Portrait of Miss Mary* by Donna S. Moore-LeMaster, a junior at Cameron University in Lawton; An untitled work by University of Tulsa senior Eric Gapsch; And *He Rode a Great Beast* by recent Oklahoma City University graduate Trent Lawson; *Sphere 01*, a laminated plywood sculpture by Morgan Robinson of Edmond.



shooting at a medical lab or devising a new marketing strategy to building a tree house for our children in the backyard, we utilize creative thinking and problem solving on a regular basis without even realizing it.

Tapping into this vein of buried creativity is essential for a working artist, but it can be essential to school-age children as well. Too often, the arts are dismissed as superfluous incidentals to a traditional curriculum, but as an artist-in-residence, I see children of all ages and abilities possessing an intense curiosity about the world, a desire to learn, and a genuine need to communicate their own ideas and beliefs in a creative way.

When we surround our children with artistic and creative thinking, we remind them that often, in learning as in life, there is more than one approach to a problem and certainly more than one answer.

Since the passage of House Bill 1017 in 1990, music and visual arts have been a mandated part of the core curriculum in all Oklahoma schools. Students are now tested on these concepts, and there is an arts-related high school graduation requirement as well. While student assessment and graduation requirements have been instrumental in reinforcing the importance of arts education statewide, there continues to be a concerted effort to bring the arts to all Oklahoma children, kindergarten through twelfth grade.

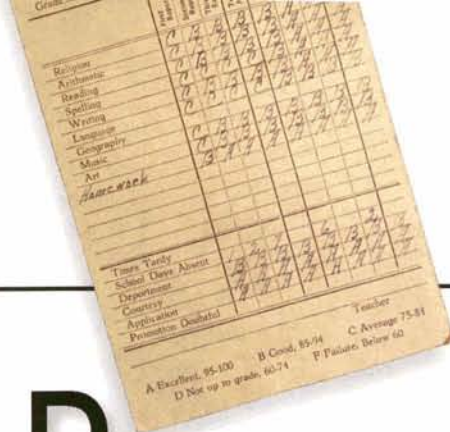
In Oklahoma, we are lucky to have many organizations which focus solely on bringing the arts to schools. The Oklahoma Arts Council, Business Circle for Arts Education, and outreach programs through many local arts councils and state museums are all leading the charge. By utilizing their expertise, programs, and monetary support, the possibilities for expanding a creative learning environment are greatly increased.

As we think about the education of Oklahoma children, now and in the coming decades, we must remind ourselves of the vital role the arts play in the development of curious, thoughtful, and well-rounded individuals. Arts education encourages students to elaborate on original ideas, to become fluent, critical thinkers, to collaborate, and to develop the discipline and tenacity to refine their own work.

In a twenty-first-century world of multiple workplaces and career changes, these skills are essential. Society requires creative problem solvers who are not afraid to share a seemingly crazy thought or go out on a limb for a bold new idea. If they've sampled a little paste along the way, that's okay, too. **OKT**

Christina Pickard is an artist and educator in Oklahoma City. A member of the Oklahoma Arts Council artist-in-residence roster, she also teaches part-time at Westminster School.





STAR BY SCOTT WIGTON

SCHOOLS

Perfect Is As Perfect Does

Prairie Vale Elementary in Deer Creek

Few life events are more thrilling than young scholars bringing home report cards ornamented with strings of straight A's. Deer Creek's Prairie Vale Elementary accomplished the practical equivalent of that feat earlier this year after the Oklahoma State Department of Education awarded the school a perfect score of 1,500 according to the Academic Performance Index (API).

If a perfect elementary school exists, Prairie Vale would be a legitimate contender for the title. This semisuburban, semirural school of 435 students west of Edmond is a member of the state's highest-ranked school district.

WHO'S MAKING THE GRADE? IN MARCH 2002, THE OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RELEASED ITS FIRST-EVER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE INDEX (API)[†]. THE RESULTS INCLUDE EVERY PUBLIC SCHOOL IN OKLAHOMA AND HOW THEY MEASURE UP. HERE, *OKLAHOMA TODAY* TAKES A LOOK AT THE CREAM OF THE CROP AND ATTEMPTS TO DEFINE WHAT SETS THESE STAR SCHOOLS APART.

[†] Based on a 1,500 point scale, the API factors in several items including test scores, attendance, and graduation rates. Not included in the research? Students' poverty levels, school size, or student mobility rates.



Students at Deer Creek's Prairie Vale Elementary broke ground on the school's new building in April 2001.

COMMENTS: Your parental involvement is key. Thank you.

"We feel we have a really strong school," says four-year Prairie Vale principal, Toni Jones. "We weren't surprised we did well, but we were surprised at the perfect score. It's a nice validation that we're on the right track."

Prairie Vale capitalizes on its curriculum, parental support, and teacher enthusiasm. The school emphasizes a concept broadly known as differentiation, in which teachers take an active role in making sure each student is learning to his or her potential. For example, if a third-grade student is ready for fifth-grade reading or math, the student gets that level of one-on-one instruction. Conversely, if a student needs remediation, it is made available.

Jones extols Prairie Vale's twenty-five certified teachers for their exceptional dedication, remarking that she often sees them working long hours and on weekends. "They go far above and beyond the call of duty to provide the best opportunities for our students," she says.

Community and parental support in Deer Creek are equally important ingredients in the district's recipe for success. The district almost never fails to support school bond elections and has passed two in Jones' short tenure. "The school really is the community here," she says.

The parents—no surprise—are highly invested in the school. Prairie Vale Parent Teacher Organization president, substitute

teacher, and mother of a second grader and a fourth grader, Angela Burnett commends the close relationship between school administration and parents for giving Prairie Vale an edge.

"The relationship we have with teachers and the principal just flows and is quote, unquote, perfect," she says. "We don't have to struggle to find out what's going on."

In fact, parents usually are a part of the day-to-day life at the school, helping out in classrooms, on the playground, or in the school garden.

"Parental involvement is very high. I see anywhere from four to eight parents at the school each day," she says.

She also credits less tangible but no less

TOP 10 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

DISTRICT	PRINCIPAL	CERTIFIED STAFF
1. Southeast ES (Jenks)	Dr. Marilyn Livingston	30
2. Central ES (Jenks)	Suzanne Lai	34
3. Prairie Vale ES (Deer Creek)	Toni Jones	25
4. Early Childhood Center (Collinsville)	Janice Pollard	6
5. Kindergarten Center (Miami)	Burl Moore	6
6. Nichols Hills ES (Oklahoma City)	Carol Berry	15
7. Darnaby ES (Union)	Susan Crowder	38
8. Kindergarten (Sand Springs)	Mercedes Ellis	19
9. Longfellow ES (Alva)	Beverly Owen	16
10. Sequoyah ES (Tahlequah)	Dr. Tom Barlow	25

real factors for the school's success.

"It's a warm, inviting atmosphere," Burnett says. "It's challenging academically but also nurturing socially."

Adds Jones, "We are by no means a perfect school. But we're always striving to improve on what we do."

The Sum of Its Parts

Chamberlain Middle School in Fairview

If there is any such thing as a formula for academic accomplishment, Chamberlain Middle School in Fairview seems to possess

Small-town doesn't mean low-tech. Computer labs have become the norm at schools across the state, including this one at Chamberlain Middle School in Fairview. Chamberlain is the sixth-ranked middle school in Oklahoma, according to the Oklahoma State Department of Education's API rankings.

it. The math is simple: Add good teachers and a high level of parental involvement to overall exceptional community support and the sum equals educational excellence.

The school, which encompasses the sixth through eighth grades, ranked sixth among all middle and junior high schools statewide according to the API rankings. Not bad for a rural school of 180 students located in a small community on the plains forty miles west of Enid.

Third-year principal Billy Sacket chalks up the school's achievement not only to a cadre of twenty-two committed teachers, but to a wider community culture that stresses education.

"There is strong parent and community support, which creates high expectations for everyone involved," says Sacket. "And that makes the biggest difference."

Fairview has almost never failed to pass a bond election in support of its schools. The most recent election in 2002 earmarked \$250,000 for technology upgrades and to finish a school auditorium. "The school really is a community-wide effort," Sacket says.

Parents, of course, figure prominently in Chamberlain's arithmetic of accomplish-

At Fairview's Chamberlain Middle School, the formula for success is no secret. Dedicated teachers and committed parents result in excellence.

ment. Without their active involvement in their children's educations, even the best curricula, facilities, and teachers would likely be for naught.

"There is definitely a correlation between parental involvement and the success of the school," Sacket says. "Without parental and community support, it would be an uphill struggle."

Parents are encouraged to participate in children's learning, and the school provides a website so parents can check grades, follow homework assignments, and keep up to date on school activities.

Delena Hardaway has put three sons through Chamberlain; the most recent, Zachary, fourteen, has just started ninth grade at Fairview High School.

"We've been very pleased with how the children have been prepared there," she says. "The school involves the whole community, the parents are very involved, and you couldn't ask for a better situation."

Like other parents, Hardaway has served as a school mentor, helping students assess career options and facilitating guest speakers and field trips. She also cites school fairs, open houses, and frequent parent-teacher conferences as vital channels of communication.

"One of the things I appreciate most is that we have good teachers who are interested in

the students and who come up with inventive ways to present their material and make

it exciting. People are exceedingly proud of this system and this school."

Advancing to the Front of the Line

Classen High School of Advanced Studies in Oklahoma City

What happens when you combine several hundred eager, extremely bright students with an equally motivated group of educators and a demanding curriculum? A place like Classen High School of Advanced Studies.

Inaugurated as a fine arts school for exceptional students in 1994, Classen has become the marquee school of the Oklahoma City Public Schools. In March 2002, the Oklahoma State Department of Education's Academic Performance Index scored Classen the state's top public high school.

That comes as little surprise to Classen parents, teachers, administrators, and students. Not that they are haughty. They simply have high expectations—and they meet them year after year.

"Most kids pride themselves as nerds at Classen," says 2002 graduate Liz Rice. Rice, who is attending DePauw University in Indiana this fall, unabashedly admits she fit the bill. At Classen, she served as student council president and led a successful campaign to open a campus coffee shop.

Like most students, Rice entered



TOP 10 MIDDLE/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

DISTRICT	PRINCIPAL	CERTIFIED STAFF
1. Leedey JH	Sherman Lauder	10
2. Deer Creek MS	Becky Wilkinson	31
3. Carver MS (Tulsa)	Cleta Driver	38
4. Cheyenne MS (Edmond)	Debbie Bendick	25
5. Sequoyah MS (Edmond)	Jeff L. Edwards	80
6. Chamberlain MS (Fairview)	Billy Sacket	16
7. Plainview MS	Stan Kittrell	22
8. Cimarron MS (Edmond)	Joe Fine	59
9. Classen MS of Advanced Studies (OKC)	Dr. Ron Maxfield	29
10. Jenks MS	Katherine McGrew	42



Classen High School of Advanced Studies, located in the oldest high school building in Oklahoma City, ranked number one in the department of education's API rankings. The school, built immediately after World War I, was opened as a junior high in 1991, a high school in 1925.

Classen's sister school—Classen Middle School of Advanced Studies—as a sixth grader. Each year, the middle school accepts around 120 students from some 700 district and out-of-district applicants, skimming off many of the brightest kids in the Oklahoma City area. In addition to lofty scholastic aptitude, students often must audition in a particular discipline, such as drama or music, or write sparkling essays.

Is it fair, then, to compare Classen to other public schools?

"Absolutely not," says Classen English teacher Phil Reid. "We have the advantage of handpicking the student body."

Reid, however, says there is an overriding justification for a school such as Classen.

"There should be a place for exceptional students," he says. "They shouldn't be condemned to mediocrity."

Once in the system, Classen students—whose ethnic breakdown is 58 percent white, 28 percent African American, and the remainder equal parts Asian, Hispanic, and Native American—enjoy exposure to a wide range of disciplines such as philosophy, world religion, and social anthropology. They are given opportunities to expand their horizons far beyond conventional cur-

ricula and into advanced-placement classes and a challenging two-year International Baccalaureate program.

Reid says students are more than up to the challenge.

"We have students who want to be challenged, and a motivated student body makes all the difference," he says.

The payoff of a Classen education is usually well worth the effort, with students often gaining entrée into elite colleges and universities.

Rice, who studied piano, music theory, drama, and speech along with core subjects, has no doubt her seven years at Classen played a big part in molding her into the person she is today—smart, broad-minded, and prepared. Is she worried about the challenges that lay ahead in college?

"I'm feeling confident," she says.

Vertical Integration

Booker T. Washington High School in Tulsa

Booker T. Washington High School has enthroned itself in the upper reaches of Oklahoma's scholastic stratosphere. The Tulsa school also has provided a strong example of the heights to which a diverse school can aspire. The Oklahoma State Department of Education ranked the school

second among all public high schools in the state according to its API ranking.

Washington's performance comes as no surprise. The school has been a perennial academic achiever, year after year churning out a bumper crop of scholars (twelve National Merit Semifinalists last year), many bound for the finest colleges in America.

What makes Washington work? Unquestionably, students benefit from a curriculum laced with advanced-placement courses, exotic languages (among them Chinese, Russian, and Japanese), and an

TOP 10 HIGH SCHOOLS

DISTRICT	PRINCIPAL	CERTIFIED STAFF
1. Classen HS of Advanced Studies (OKC)	Dr. Ron Maxfield	30
2. Booker T. Washington (Tulsa)	Alice Black	84
3. Ringwood HS	Larry Nance	13
4. North HS (Edmond)	Dr. Ed Story	119
5. Deer Creek-Lamont HS	Tamara Newberry	11
6. Bartlesville HS	Dr. Debi Boyles	66
7. Santa Fe HS (Edmond)	Vicki L. Simpson	103
8. Paden HS	Roger Little	11
9. Adair HS	Clifton Collins	24
10. Freshman Academy (Jenks)	Stephen Matthews	44



Booker T. Washington principal Alice Black talks with students. According to API, her school is the second-highest ranking high school in Oklahoma.

International Baccalaureate program that make it unique among Tulsa area public high schools.

Then there is the raw material—the students themselves, selectively culled from across the city. The school, which includes grades nine through twelve, receives up to a thousand freshmen applications each year, accepting only 350.

"We look for a well-rounded student," says principal Alice Black.

Integrated and designated a magnet school in 1974, Washington, with 1,250 students, carefully maintains a 48-48 balance between black and white students. Indeed, the racial mix is seen as a practical education in itself.

"The world is not all one color," Black says. "We have all kinds of students here. It's a melting pot and gives students a picture of what's going to take place in the real world."

TOP 10 K-12 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

DISTRICT	SUPERINTENDENT	CERTIFIED STAFF
1. Deer Creek	Dr. Pamela D. Twidwell	120
2. Ringwood	Ray Johnson	27
3. Burlington	Glen Elliott	18
4. Mulhall-Orlando	Dennis I. Smith	22
5. Edmond	Dr. David Goin	1,150
6. Jenks	Dr. Kirby Lehman	640
7. Medford	Don Simmons	32
8. Pond Creek-Hunter	Gerald Miller	23
9. Plainview	Steve Merlyn	95
10. Lomega	Steve Mendell	19

While race serves as the backdrop of a Washington education, scholastics take center stage.

"For me, race wasn't an issue," says Chris Moore, a 2002 African American graduate of Washington now attending the University of Kansas and majoring in journalism. "I just found people I related to, and my interests dictated who I spent time with."

Moore credits a high level of student motivation along with quality instruction (more than 50 percent of teachers hold master's degrees, and seven teachers have PhDs) for earning the school its laurels.

Black agrees and cites the coming together of parents, educators, and students in a divine trinity of education.

"It's definitely a combination of things," she says. "Parental support, hard-working teachers, and students who come to learn."

The Powerhouse Jenks K-12 District

How important is education to the Jenks community? Here's a hint. The number thirty-eight is significant. That's how many school bond issues have come up in the district's history. Every one has passed. That's even more noteworthy given that bond issues must achieve a supermajority, or 60 percent, of the vote.



Students at a Jenks elementary school practice navigating a computer program.

While Jenks has long been known for its athletic prowess in producing successive state championship football squads, it is no slouch academically, either. In fact, for all state districts K-12, Jenks ranks sixth on the Oklahoma State Department of Education's Academic Performance Index. Two Jenks elementary schools, Southeast and Central, achieved perfect scores of 1,500.

Jenks is a large, thirty-eight-square-mile district covering parts of south Tulsa and the city of Jenks itself. More than 9,300 students attend its nine schools, staffed with 600 certified teachers. Although solidly suburban, the district is not made up only of well-heeled children. Fully a fifth of the students live at or below the federal poverty guideline, says superintendent Dr. Kirby Lehman.

The common denominator for all Jenks children, however, is the top-flight education they receive, regardless of socioeco-

omic status. Again, the importance of parental involvement and an innovative, committed staff cannot be overestimated.

"I really believe that parental involvement and high, high expectations are key ingredients to student success in Jenks," says Lehman, who has served as superintendent for more than thirteen years.

Concerned parents and dynamic teachers who hold high expectations translate into motivated students, he explains, and there is no substitute for that.

"Unmotivated kids will not produce in the classroom," Lehman says. "It takes adults to motivate young people, and we have a large cadre of adults to motivate the kids."

Mick Murray was one of those kids. Murray attended Jenks schools from kindergarten through twelfth grade and now is pursuing a degree at Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

"My experience at Jenks was wonderful," he says. "Everything starts first in the home. My parents were really active in Jenks. They set the foundation for me."

Although relatively large as far as suburban school districts go, Jenks takes pains to ensure that students do not feel lost or overwhelmed.

"The overall atmosphere was positive," Murray says. "The staff all the way through sets Jenks above other schools. I've talked to people who transferred in to Jenks who were just shocked because the staff does care."

Lehman concurs, adding that there's a place for every student at Jenks.

"We have many curricular and ex-



Students in the Jenks district have many opportunities for creative expression, including music and band classes. Arts education has proven a positive motivator for students, lessening discipline problems and encouraging creative thought.

tracurricular activities where kids can identify with other individuals, groups, teachers, or sponsors and become a part of something," he says. "There is a place for every kid in our school, and our staff works hard to find a place where students can be highly successful."

Jenks is constantly trying to build on its motto, "A tradition of excellence with a vision for tomorrow."

In spite of the district's lofty API ranking and continued athletic success, Lehman says, "We have to focus on doing a better job tomorrow than we did yesterday."

Little Dixie's Diamond

Glover K-8 District

With just eighty-seven students, Glover Elementary, tucked away in southeastern Oklahoma thirteen miles from Broken Bow, is unexceptional in size. Nevertheless, it has earned a big reputation as a rural school and district that gets superior academic results.

Glover ranked seventh statewide among

Glover Elementary students get creative in the school's library. The secret to Glover's high API score? The residents of this McCurtain County town understand the value of education.

all K-8 districts in the Academic Performance Index rankings. While pleased with his school's performance, superintendent and principal Jon Tuck is careful about reading too much into the results.

"It really comes down to the students, and that's a year-to-year thing," he says. "The API is a little bit misleading because it doesn't track the same students [over time]. Different groups of students perform differently."

Even so, Tuck concedes that at Glover, where between 30 to 40 percent of students are Native American, "we seem to get all we can out of the students, and we get very close to their potential."

But how? Tuck insists there is no magic formula nor philosophical hand-wringing about education theory, just old-fashioned community emphasis on the value of education.

"The school really is the center of the community here," says Tuck, now in his third year as Glover's top administrator. "There is a tremendous amount of feeling for the school."

K-8 districts are designed to stabilize the learning experience for young students. Additionally, at Glover, the school's small

TOP 10 K-8 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

DISTRICT	SUPERINTENDENT	CERTIFIED STAFF
1. Moffett	John D. Gordon	19
2. Robin Hill	Jan Sharp	16
3. Oakdale	Kim Lanier	24
4. Belfonte	Jim Motes	17
5. Ravia	David Duncan	13
6. Cottonwood	Teri Brecheen	16
7. Glover	Jon A. Tuck	11
8. Banner	Larry York	11
9. Friend	Dale Smith	14
10. Pleasant Grove	Dale Pope	12

size fosters close relationships between teachers and parents. And with small class sizes, no student is overlooked.

"The level of parental involvement also is extremely high," Tuck says. "They are very interested in what their children are doing at school. The students get strong discipline at home and strong discipline here, and we get a lot done accordingly."

Doris Richbourg sent her two children through Glover, and now her two grandchildren attend. She suggests size and the quality of interaction between student and teacher account for most of Glover's success.

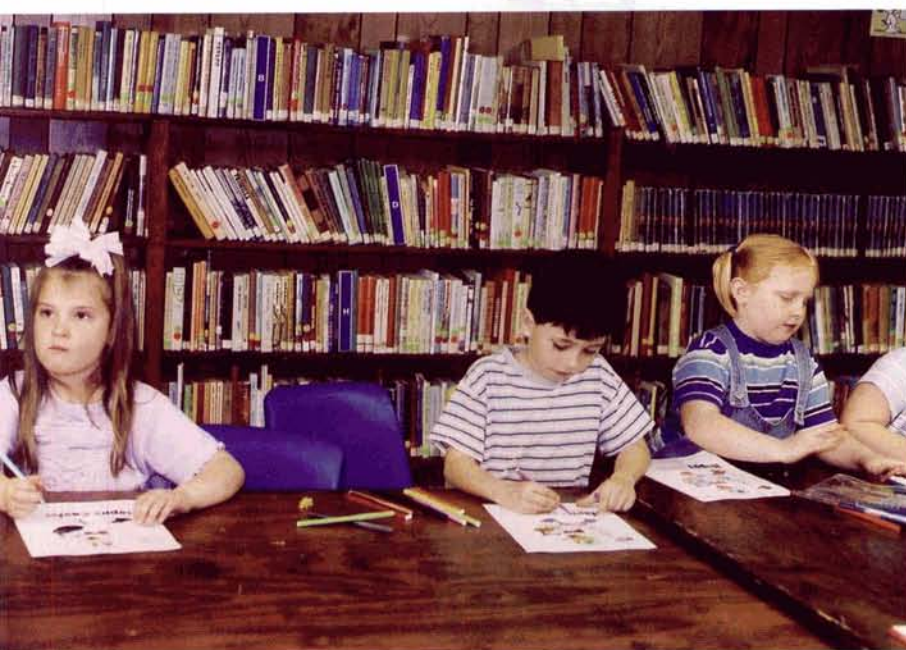
"We've got excellent teachers here who show a high level of concern for the students," says Richbourg, now the school's secretary and a former member of the parent and teacher organization. "With the school being small, there is a lot of one-on-one, which I believe contributes to its success."

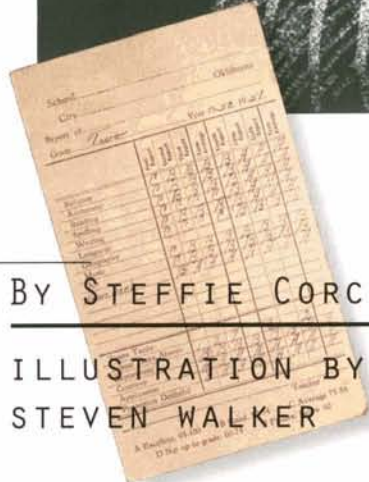
Tuck credits his eleven teachers, too, but says the school's curriculum and teaching methods do not stray far, if at all, from the mainstream.

"We basically follow a standard curriculum," he says. "Again, it goes back to teachers and students—we don't do anything special and unique." Clearly, Glover already is doing well.

But, says Tuck, "We're always looking to improve. We're never totally satisfied with the results," he says. "But the [current] numbers are an accurate assessment of where the students are now."

OKT





BY STEFFIE CORCORAN

ILLUSTRATION BY
STEVEN WALKER

GUIMOND, GET HAPPY!

I'M NOT A SAVER. STILL, AGAINST MY NATURE, I SAVED THE cards and letters students wrote me over the years. Stacks of the stash are from the Guimond family, for the most part notes from Rachel, my all-time favorite (any teacher who tells you she doesn't have favorites is a) lying or b) a pod person). Rachel and I first encountered one another in first-period, honors seventh grade English. A natural leader and achiever, she was cute, smart, and snappy.

The next year, Joe Guimond shuffled through my classroom door. Rachel's mom, Gloria, told me not to expect Joe and Rachel to be anything alike. They weren't. They didn't look alike (the Guimonds adopted Joe, their nephew, when he was five). They didn't act alike (Joe was, Gloria explained, tough to motivate, an introverted boy with a difficult early childhood). Still, the new Guimond got me.

A kid named John sat behind Joe in the seating chart. No matter what John was doing, Joe—doomed to a front-row seat—was twisted around 180 degrees. If he doodled, Joe watched. If he wrote, Joe watched. If he had his head on his desk, Joe watched. An invisible magnetic force pulled Joe into whatever frame of reference John occupied. It ticked me off.

The diva in me expected 100 percent attention from my students. I worked hard to be fascinating, edifying, and entertaining, and generally students seemed to think I was. Still, they had fatal attractions for their own kind. Joe was not immune.

"Turn around, Joe!" I would yell. In a flash, Joe would wince and snap to attention, a big "I didn't do anything" metal smile reflecting off the morning sunlight.

THE WHOLE CLASS, INCLUDING ME, LAUGHED SO LOUDLY THE TEACHER NEXT DOOR CAME IN TO CHECK ON THE RUCKUS.

When Joe wasn't mesmerized by John or daydreaming, he seemed to find the class at least semi-interesting. He laughed at my examples involving bodily fluids and my incessant teasing. Meet 'em where they are was among my favorite philosophies.

Though Joe didn't set the world on fire in my class, he did fine, mostly B's. (The Guimond parents had a strict "no C" policy.) I pestered him to turn his work in, and he more or less listened and learned, despite a classroom full of seventh-grade distractions. His writing wasn't the kind you pass around to other English teachers, but it was pretty funny and sometimes even had personality. Joe was a free spirit before he was old enough to be responsible for it.

I learned fast that the final two or three weeks of every semester can be an endurance test. Everybody wears down. Students are easily distracted. Teachers worry over grading final projects and getting the state and district curricula covered.

Thank god for mandated poetry. The truth is, probably 98 percent of seventh graders adore poetry. They love reading and writing it, and they will tolerate studying it.

I saved it for last. While other teachers were sending scores of students to the office, our class was hopping with a two-week poetry fest. For their final project, students were required to put together a notebook with critiques of poems we'd studied and several original compositions.

Like most his age, Joe bonded with rhymed couplet poems in the style of Dr. Seuss. During the poetry unit, he perked up and wrote poem after poem after poem, all, of course, with rhymed couplets. But no matter how overwrought, sentimental, ridiculous, unintelligible, or even plagiarized students' poems were, I praised. And praised and praised, slyly inserting cleverly disguised tips for improvement or suggesting gently that maybe, just maybe, they'd seen that poem somewhere and copied it down? Word for word, perhaps?

The general quality—and unintentional hilarity—of seventh grade poetry is apparent in these actual excerpts of verse written by students in my classroom, all of which ended up in a drawer at home:

I may have black hair/You may not/I may have brow eyes/You may not/I may have pimples on my nose/You may not/You may like to wear red cloths/I may not/You may like spinach and blacked-eyed peas/I may not.

Ruby is sweet and Mrs. Corcoran is nice/I'm telling the truth because I have no reason to lie.

A rose is the most beautiful flower in the world/It blooms in the most beautiful time of year/As a rose grows old and begins to die/I just remember/There's no reason to cry.

The breeze is cold/The breeze is hot/The breeze is blowing/Sometimes it's not.

Daily, students begged to read their newest poems aloud in class. A couple of times I stumbled, letting them read poems I hadn't

given a once-over, poems that slammed an unpopular student or teacher. But I never thought twice about letting Joe read his. He was, after all, my favorite's sibling and fast moving up the list.

He cleared his throat dramatically, then read "I Pick It Good," a rhymed couplet poem about—well, you can imagine. The whole class, including me, laughed so loudly the teacher next door came in to check on the ruckus. Joe read his nose-picking poem to him. We talked Joe into going next door to read the poem to his class, too, where lots of other seventh graders were studying geography. They laughed, too.

Joe's sweet-but-shy shell cracked a little that day. He ended up reading his poem to anybody who'd listen. Joe suddenly considered himself an author, and I burst with pride. If it's gross, it's hot among seventh graders, and Joe's market value soared. He subsequently titled his poetry notebook "I Pick Good Poems."

A couple of years later, Joe wrote me a letter of appreciation, an assignment from his ninth grade English teacher. By now he had been in my class every year, including two years of creative writing, where he did inconsistent and often mediocre work—despite a great

imagination, creativity, even some talent, Joe was, at the time, irrepressibly lazy. But that didn't change my feelings for him. It wasn't about his work. It was about the kid, about acceptance, about connection. The letter read:

Dear Ms. Corcoran:

I just want to thank you for teaching me so much about English & writing. You made it fun & interesting. Thank you for teaching me how to make my writing more interesting, so people wouldn't mind reading it. I have improved on my writing & owe it to you. Your classes have been fun & I want you to know you're my favorite English teacher I ever had. I'm going to miss you.

Sincerely,

Joe Guimond

P.S. I'll try to come to see you once in a while.

On his most recent report card, Joe, now a senior and apparently quite a hit with the ladies, made three A's and a B. His teachers still have to prod him, but he's turned out to be a wonderful young man. His sister, beloved Rachel, interned for *Oklahoma Today* last summer (nothing coincidental about that).

The letter goes in a stack, back in the drawer along with all the rest of it. The memories, though—of Joe, of Rachel, of so many others—aren't so easily contained. Surely we're not merely supposed to be here to pass, unchanged, through one another's lives. **OKT**

Steffie Corcoran, senior editor at Oklahoma Today since July 2000, taught at Del Crest Junior High School from 1994 to 2000. In 1998, she was named Teacher of the Year by the Midwest City-Del City School district.



Rachel, youngest brother Tristan, and Joe in August 1995.



BY HOLLY BAILEY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN JERNIGAN

THEY LOOKED AT FIRST LIKE TYPICAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, a few dozen girls and boys walking to class in the sunshine of an unusually warm spring morning last May. At least one boy had braces. One girl had nails polished a silvery hue. A few steps behind them, a couple walked hand in hand, obvious sweethearts. Nearly all wore a variation of what some might describe as Abercrombie & Fitch couture—or, as those past the age of twenty-five might better know it, a pair of aged blue jeans and a T-shirt, the hipper the better.

It could have been a scene from any high school campus in Oklahoma. But upon closer inspection, it was quickly apparent that these kids were a world apart from the everyday high school student. Maybe it was the size of their backpacks, many bulging with books and papers. The more likely tip-off was simply the conversation. Here, in this crowd on this day, there was no talk of Britney Spears or Tony Hawk or anything closely resembling something you might hear on MTV.

Instead, they talked about chemistry—in particular, organic chemistry. Even more specific than that, they spoke of hydrocarbons, polymers, and other terms that might be more fluent to a *Jeopardy!* champion or a Nobel Prize-winning scientist. But this is no ordinary high school campus, and these are no ordinary kids.

These are the students of the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics, an Oklahoma City-based school founded in the early 1980s to educate some of the state's most gifted juniors and seniors in the fields of math and science. It is a residential program, meaning that students—and even some faculty—live on campus and breathe academics throughout the school year. The school is entirely state-funded, with tuition, books, and meals provided for students free of charge. It is one of only eight state-funded boarding schools in the United States.

Each year, more than three hundred sophomores around the state apply for admission, but limited by available dorm space, only seventy to eighty applicants make the cut. In the twelve years since OSSM officially opened its doors, students have been admitted from all of the state's seventy-seven counties, making it one of the most geographically inclusive schools in the state—college, high school, or otherwise.

"It truly is a privilege to come here, and students know that up front," says Edna Manning, OSSM's president and top administrator since the late 1980s. A

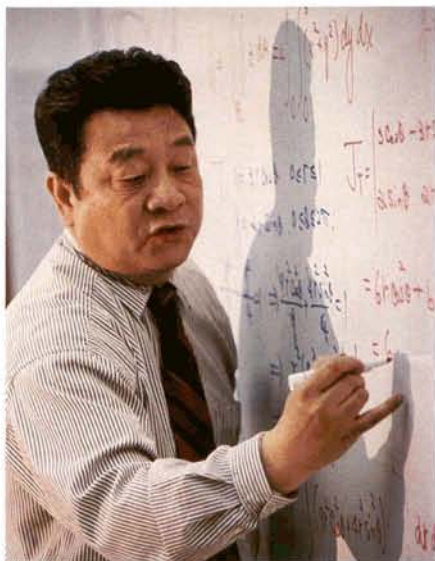


OSSM student John Meier of Chickasha, opposite, studies for finals in his dorm room. This page: The main entrance of Lincoln School, the first building opened on OSSM's campus; Cecilia Nguyen of Yukon and Nathan Liles of Oklahoma City work in the computer lab inside Lincoln School.

COMMENTS: Excellent work! Congratulations.

ARY KIDS

AT THE STATE-CREATED, STATE-FUNDED OKLAHOMA SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS, SMARTS, DISCIPLINE, AND EXCELLENCE ARE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE. A LOOK INTO THE BOARDING SCHOOL POPULATED BY 144 OF OKLAHOMA'S HIGHEST ACHIEVERS.



Professor Chengde Feng, top, works equations during his multivariate calculus class. A classical sight: This statue of Caesar has been under construction by students for a number of years. The work-in-progress sculpture presides over the downstairs hallway in Lincoln School.

Texas native who at one time taught the sons and daughters of NASA employees in Houston, Manning is widely credited by state lawmakers and educators across the country as the architect of OSSM's curriculum, one of the most demanding in the nation.

As the school's officials often note, Dr. Julian Stanley, a nationally recognized expert on gifted schools, has called OSSM "the most rigorous academic program of its kind in the nation." One has only to consider a few facts to judge its results.

Since 1992, its eleven graduating classes (825 students) have generated 177 National Merit Scholars and 110 finalists, 123 Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholars, and two Presidential Scholars. Since 1999, OSSM's graduating class has twice boasted the highest ACT average in the country, beating out more than 8,200 other high schools with scores of 31.8 in 1999 and 31.5 in 2001.

"If we aren't striving to be the best secondary school in the nation, there's no point in any of us coming to work,"

Currently, OSSM is in the midst of a \$25 million building program to complete its thirty-two-acre campus near the State Capitol in Oklahoma City, paid for by a combination of public and private funds. Over the last decade, it has restored an old Oklahoma City public school for its main building. A residence hall capable of hosting 144 students opened in 1998, and a gym followed in 1999.

During the 2001-02 school year, the school completed construction on two new buildings: a library and a science center, the latter offering more than a dozen teaching and research labs. Meanwhile, plans for a second residence hall are under way, pending the approval of bond money in the state legislature. When completed, OSSM will be capable of doubling its enrollment to three hundred students per year.

What's next? "Anything, everything," Manning says, smiling.

IN 1982, EARL MITCHELL, A BIOCHEM-
istry professor at Oklahoma State Uni-

**'IF WE AREN'T STRIVING TO BE THE BEST
SECONDARY SCHOOL IN THE NATION, THERE'S NO
POINT IN ANY OF US COMING TO WORK.'**

says Dr. Kenneth Lease, vice president for academic services at OSSM. "I don't jest when I say that every one of us here wants to be compared with schools in New York or North Carolina. It's a very real goal for us—one that I think we can achieve, and in some ways, we already have achieved."

Like almost any tale of accomplishment, OSSM was hardly an overnight success. Created with little fanfare by a legislative resolution in 1983, it took another five years for the school to get state funding—and even longer to gain respect from many members of the state legislature. In some ways, the school continues to struggle against the perception of elitism and that it's a drain on state funding.

Yet the school continues to flourish.

versity, was sitting in his Stillwater office reading a copy of the weekly magazine *Science*. North Carolina governor James Hunt had written an editorial about the nation's need to focus more intensely on math and science education. Hunt referred to what was then a relatively new concept: the idea of a separate high school for gifted students that focused solely on math and science.

The North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics had opened in 1980, and the state had found the school enormously successful. One hundred and fifty students attended the only state-funded residential school in the nation at that time. Like Oklahoma, North Carolina in the 1980s struggled over issues of education funding and low test scores among students, not to



mention an economy on the brink of bust.

"In so many ways, Oklahoma was in the same boat as North Carolina," Mitchell says. "I knew that we needed to take initiative to make things better for our students, especially gifted students who were getting lost in the shuffle."

Motivated, Mitchell wrote to state representative Penny Williams (now a state senator), a Tulsan widely known as one of education's biggest champions in the legislature. She seemed intrigued.

The following year, Williams introduced a resolution to create OSSM. At the time, it received a one-sentence mention in the *Daily Oklahoman's* legislative roundup, while the *Tulsa World* made no mention of the school at all.

Not long after, the legislature approved Williams' bill, which called for creation of the school and provided \$15,000 to establish a board of directors to undertake that task. For several years, that would be the most activity OSSM would see on its behalf publicly. While Williams and the school's other proponents, including state senator Bernice Shedrick of Stillwater, continued to lobby their fellow lawmakers to fund the school, legislation that would do so was dead on arrival for several years.

In 1986, Governor George Nigh appointed a twenty-five-member board of trustees to OSSM and named Dan Little, a Madill attorney, to chair the panel. Little had just finished a stint on the board of regents at the University of Oklahoma.

Melinda Ross of Yukon was one of three OSSM students selected to train for the United States Chemistry Olympiad team. It was the first time in the competition's history that three students were selected from the same school.

"When I was a regent at OU," says Little, "everything was so well organized. We had secretaries who took care of the administrative stuff for us, like organizing meetings. But OSSM was an entirely different world. We didn't have that luxury."

For much of the next two years, the school's proponents continued to lobby the legislature for funding. They continued to be turned down, though the votes were close. Meanwhile, cities around the state began to show interest in hosting the school.



In 1987, the OSSM board launched a site competition and used its paltry funding to hire consultants to help determine where to build. Eight cities threw their hats into the ring, from Chickasha to Chandler. Finalists included Oklahoma City, Edmond, Norman, and Stillwater.

Initially, Norman and Stillwater were considered frontrunners because of their proximity to OU and OSU, but, as Little recalls, consultants told the board to build the school where it would not be considered a subsidiary of a major state university. After a tie vote between Oklahoma City and Stillwater, the board picked Oklahoma City.

On the surface, Oklahoma City's bid was not necessarily the most attractive. It proposed renovating a site near the State Capitol, which at the time was undergoing massive urban renewal. An entire neighborhood just west of the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center had been wiped out to make way for construction of the soon-to-be-opened Centennial Expressway.

Traffic concerns and the lack of a neighborhood had prompted the Oklahoma City Public Schools to close Lincoln Elementary, a 1914 building that housed one of the city's oldest schools. The city proposed using a mix of private and public funds to purchase and renovate Lincoln School and the land surrounding it.

That July, the board hired Manning to head up OSSM. A tough-as-nails career educator, she was coming off a tenure as superintendent of the Shawnee Public Schools.

"I had been reading stories in the paper about OSSM," says Manning. "I knew it was something I wanted to get involved with."

Over the next two years, Manning and the OSSM board engaged in an all-out war for state funding. At the time, it was literally an up-at-dawn, pride-swallowing siege, with the group holding breakfast meetings with lawmakers and spending their days walking the halls of the capitol in their quest for funding.

"You can't imagine everything we went through getting the legislature to back this school," Manning says.

The following summer, OSSM announced plans to host its first class in the fall of 1990. There was no problem filling its inaugural roster, as more than a thousand students had expressed interest in the program. Manning and others did have one major dilemma: OSSM didn't have a campus.

Because of funding shortfalls, renovations at Lincoln School were more than a year behind schedule, and ground had yet to be broken for any other building on the campus. Administrators publicly wondered how to solve the dilemma, but months later, a quick agreement was reached. Until the campus was ready, students would sleep in the OU dorms and attend classes at the Health Sciences Center (an arrangement which would last for seven years). To get there, they would board a shuttle at 7 a.m. and return home at 5 p.m.

ON SEPTEMBER 5, 1990, THE OKLAHOMA School of Science and Mathematics opened for its first day of school. But months before classes even began, Manning and the school's faculty had been at work selecting the student body. That planning included the creation of an elaborate and highly competitive application process that remains in effect today.

To gain admission to OSSM, students are asked to fill out a basic application, which includes providing the school with everything from school transcripts to a record of academic and extracurricular activities, such as participation in the Oklahoma Math League or a school debate team. In addition to requiring recommendations from a student's math, science, and English teachers, the school also mandates that applicants take the ACT prior to applying to OSSM and write several essays. The school also requires a brief essay from applicants' parents about how they feel about their child possibly attending OSSM.

According to Suzanne Donnolo, OSSM's admissions director, applications are then reviewed by a committee comprised of OSSM faculty and community leaders from around the state, such as alumni of Leadership Oklahoma. Most references to a student's name, hometown, gender, and race are blacked out during consideration of the applications to protect anonymity



Above: Students work in the Lincoln School computer lab. The lab was originally the old school's boiler room; When schedules don't permit a formal lunch, the residence hall cafeteria prepares brown bags for students. Here, Jenny Rupert of Stratford eats on the fly during an impromptu study session in the student lounge.

Among the newer buildings on campus is the school's library, named after Senator Bernice Shedrick of Stillwater. It stands to the north of the school's main entrance off Northeast Tenth Street.

'IT'S TOUGH AND YOU HAVE TO BE REALLY DEDICATED,' SAYS HSIEH, A FORMER STUDENT.

and to ensure the process isn't tainted. The committee then assigns a score to each application, and students with the highest ratings are invited for an interview.

According to administrators, there is no active effort to be more inclusive of race or gender, although they point out that the school's alumni has been a diverse mix. According to statistics released by the school, virtually every ethnicity from Native American to Hispanic has been represented in the school's population, even though most of the classes have had disproportionately high numbers of Asian students.

"We have no quotas when it comes to where the students come from or who they are," Donnolo says. "Our only limitations are when it comes to how many girls and boys we can admit, and that's only because of our limited dorm space."

While critics early on accused the school of being elitist and only for students in the Oklahoma City area, that has not been proven, judging by a map hanging in the school's administrative offices. There, newly arrived students from every OSSM class have marked their hometowns with toothpick-size flags. The map is covered from corner to corner.

"We're probably going to have to get a new map soon," Manning says.

In 1990, after months of interviews, grading essays, and evaluating test scores, fifty-eight students from forty-five communities in thirty-one counties across the state were accepted into the inaugural class.

Misty Young Hsieh was one of them. Sixteen when she left Mangum to attend OSSM, Hsieh left behind a town where she had lived her whole life and friends she had

known since before kindergarten. Also left behind were certain freedoms that many high school students take for granted.

"We learned pretty quickly that this isn't a school for everybody, and even today, it's still not for everybody," Hsieh says.

At OSSM, students are required to live on campus, even if they are from a high school in Oklahoma City or have family in the area. They are not permitted to drive, except on certain weekends when they are allowed to go home. Meanwhile, there are mandatory study hours, strict blocks of time from 8 to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday.

In the name of safety, outside visitors are allowed on campus only after receiving parental approval. Per an agreement with OU, the school is patrolled twenty-four hours a day by security affiliated with the Health Sciences Center.

Twice a month, students are required to attend classes on Saturdays. Unlike regular high schools, there are no competitive extracurricular sports like football or track. There is no school newspaper, even though a mystery group of students ran an online zine called the *OSSM Underground* for several semesters in the late 1990s, after

students moved into the campus dorms. The *Underground* mostly ran complaints about some of the school's strict rules.

At the dorms, phone privileges are extremely limited, and the less than half a dozen TVs spotted around campus have certain channels like Nickelodeon and the Discovery channel blocked. One of the biggest no-nos that has riled students for years—and garnered much coverage in the *Underground*—is a strict no pizza delivery rule.

"I think that's the most annoying rule of all," says Aaron Woodside, an Edmond native who graduated from the school last spring and is currently attending Harvard. "What's so bad about pizza delivery guys? It makes no sense."

In spite of all that, life at OSSM seems remarkably normal. The atmosphere is not unlike that of a small college campus, though you won't find keggers or wild parties lurking in any of its buildings. Rumor has it that the most scandalous thing to happen on campus was when a group of boys were caught a few years ago downloading songs from the Internet and taking up too much bandwidth on the school's network.

"There is no doubt that we are very structured, but we want to make it clear from the beginning that this is an environment where academics reign," Manning says. "We want to get these kids into a life pattern that prompts excellence."

Each spring, OSSM holds its own prom at the Petroleum Club in downtown Okla-

English professor Dr. Dorothy Dodd teaches her all-girl American literature class. Dodd has found that splitting up her classes by gender encourages class participation.



homa City. The only problem, students say, is that they are not allowed to leave campus the day before prom to get ready as traditional high school students would.

But there are ways around that, says Helen Shi, who graduated from OSSM last June. She says one female student placed her stylist on her visitor's list, and on the day of prom, the stylist provided hairdos and manicures to several OSSM females for the occasion.

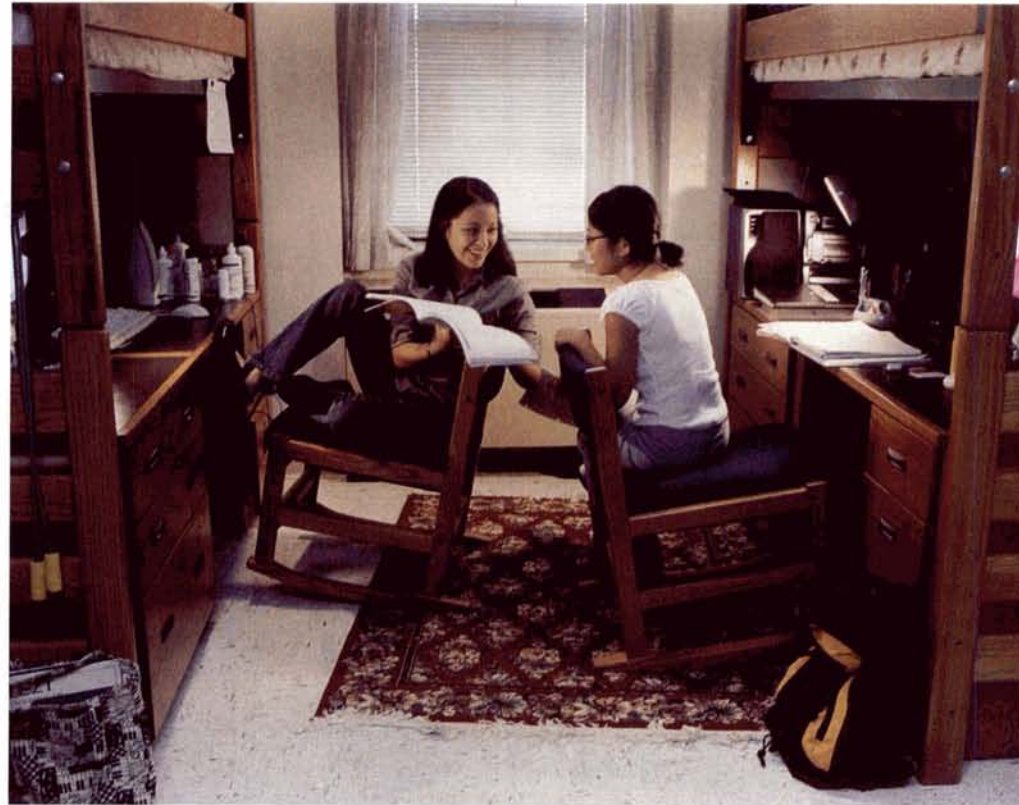
"It was really funny," Shi says, during a tour of her old dorm room, which very much resembles its college counterpart. On each floor, there is a shared shower and bathroom and a traditional living space. There are two, sometimes three, students to each dorm room, while each floor has its own resident advisor, a faculty member. Meanwhile, downstairs is the Great Hall, where students eat and receive after-hours help from the faculty.

Occasionally, students leave campus to go on field trips to museums or attend productions at the Civic Center. Faculty members take kids to the movies or the mall most weekends, just to break up the monotony of campus life. Staffers say they aim to keep things as normal as possible, even though it will never be as normal as attending a regular high school.

"Coming to OSSM, you do give up some things about regular high school life," Shi says. "But compared to the opportunities you receive here, it's a small price to pay."

That's not the only difference that takes some getting used to at OSSM. One of the biggest—and most obvious—adjustments for students is the demanding curriculum. Minimum academic requirements at the school include one and one-half units of physics, one of biology, and a variety of math and computer classes. In addition to the strong math and science program, students are also required to take two units of English, a foreign language, and a fine arts class, like painting or video production. They are also required to complete sixty hours of community service.

The curriculum is college level, something that Hsieh already knew but had confirmed during her junior year of college, when she was taught embryology from the same textbook she had used at OSSM. Now



in her third year of medical residency at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, Hsieh still calls the OSSM classes some of the toughest of her life. But while she was able to make the adjustment and eventually graduate from the school, not everyone has been as successful.

Two students dropped out of OSSM that inaugural year—a number that has remained relatively consistent in subsequent years, administrators say. Less than a dozen students have been asked to leave OSSM during its history, and in those cases, the offense was academic in nature, such as low grades. Cheating, faculty members say, has never been a problem at OSSM.

"It's tough, and you have to be really dedicated. It was one of the most rewarding and challenging times of my life," Hsieh says.

There are twenty-eight teaching faculty members at OSSM, several of whom are former college professors. More than two-thirds hold doctoral degrees, and more than a dozen have been on staff since the school opened—a statistic that Manning worries about maintaining. Over the next few years, many of the faculty, Manning included, will reach

Roommates Christine Phan, left, and Crystal Nguyen, both of Moore, take a break from studying for a quick chat in their dorm room.

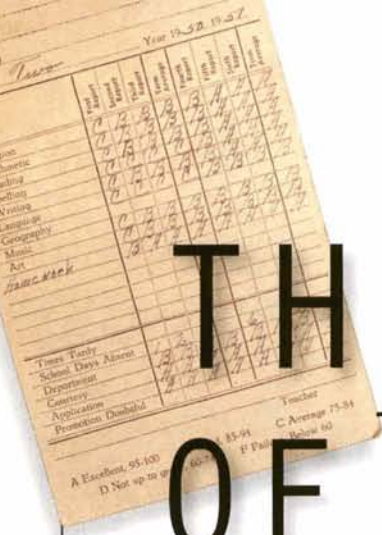
retirement age. Already, the school has had problems attracting teachers who will agree to low pay and long hours, so much so that the OSSM board recently launched a fundraising drive to begin a faculty endowment.

But Manning's biggest worry these days is about the legacy of the school. She worries about recruiting new teachers and replacing the old ones. And sometimes, she even worries about who will take over her role at the school, though she insists that she is not even close to thinking of life after OSSM. But when she does ultimately retire, there is one thing she wants.

"Not too far down the line, I hope to see one of our graduates sitting in my chair, someone who will truly understand what this school is all about," Manning says with a wistful smile. "Someone who really gets it."

OKT

Holly Bailey has written for Entertainment Weekly, Salon, and the Chicago Tribune.



THE STATE OF EDUCATION

TEACHER RETENTION, SPANISH-SPEAKING STUDENTS, HIGH-SPEED INTERNET, HANDHELD COMPUTERS, FUNDING, PENCILS, AND PUPILS: CHAD LOVE REPORTS ON PUBLIC EDUCATION IN OKLAHOMA IN 2002.

FOR TRAVELERS PASSING through on their way to somewhere else, Guymon, Oklahoma, seemingly offers not much more than an opportunity to grab a bite to eat, stretch the legs, and gas up. Just another friendly, homogeneous high plains town where the residents drive trucks, respect the flag, go to church, and support their local schools.

But Guymon is much more than that, and to understand what Guymon is, you have to first understand what it isn't, or at least what it isn't anymore. Simply put, Guymon is no longer Mayberry.

At one time, Guymon was as typically western Oklahoma as any other small town: overwhelmingly white, rural, and conservative with a declining, aging population. But with the arrival of large-scale corporate hog farming in 1996 and a subsequent influx of Hispanic immigrants, all that changed—dramatically.

Nowhere is that change more apparent than at Guymon's Salyer Elementary School.

"We have 170 students at Salyer," says principal Loire Aubrey. "Seventy-six percent of them speak Spanish as their primary language, and 94 percent of them qualify for the free and reduced lunch program. It's not unusual for us to have a second grader who's been in ten different elementary schools."

"The environment of the community and the schools has completely

transformed in the past few years," says Dr. Robert S. Neel, Guymon school superintendent. "We've gone from a 15 percent minority base to a 53 percent minority base in just the last five or six years."

Guymon is now one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the state, with a much younger population base. But it is in the area of education where many see Guymon's present as Oklahoma's future. According to Neel, school districts that want to see where they'll be in twenty years need only look to Guymon now.

"Several years ago, I heard a well-known economist and futurist speak, and he made a comment that has stuck with me," Neel says. "People who live in a country with a per capita income of \$3,000 a year who can move two hundred miles north where it's \$35,000 a year are going to come, and it's foolish to think otherwise. It's not a question of if they're going to come, because they are. It's a question of how are you, as a school district, going to deal with it. We're seeing that and living that, both here in Guymon and as a nation."

But just as Guymon embodies the state's education future in some areas, in others it is grounded firmly in the present, facing the same issues all public schools face.

Like a gangly teen, Oklahoma's public education system is in a state of transition, not only in classroom tech-

nique—where chalk and blackboards now share time with handheld computers and high-speed Internet—but in funding, demographics, testing, and teacher retention.

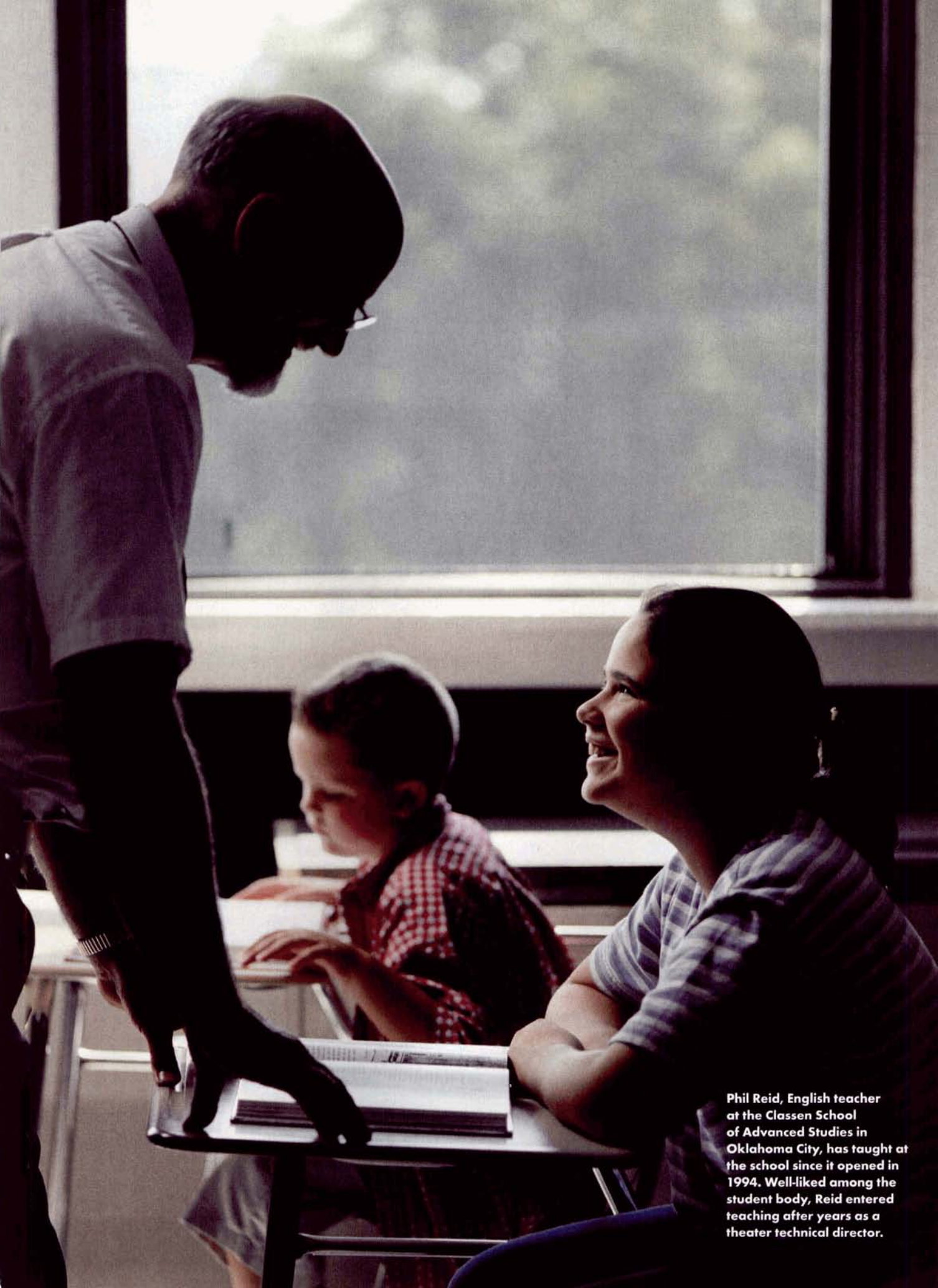
"What the great experiment of public education was and is all about is to teach students to become good, productive citizens with a high quality of life," says State Superintendent of Public Instruction Sandy Garrett, who oversees a public education system comprised of 544 school districts, 1,858 schools, 49,920 teachers, and 618,731 students.

"From time to time, it goes off tilt, and we have to find out what our objectives and goals are to bring it back in balance," says Garrett. "That's what we've been doing in the last decade."

There is no doubt that public education, both its implementation and how and to what level it's funded, has achieved a level of importance it seldom reached in the not-too-distant past. The genesis of this heightened awareness can be traced to 1990, when passage of House Bill 1017 marked the first major school reform legislation Oklahoma had seen in decades.

"The greatest impact of 1017 was lowering elementary school class sizes," says Oklahoma Education Association President Carolyn Crowder. Crowder, a former fifth-grade teacher, said before 1017, her class sizes were routinely over thirty students.

COMMENTS: Shows lots of improvement.



Phil Reid, English teacher at the Classen School of Advanced Studies in Oklahoma City, has taught at the school since it opened in 1994. Well-liked among the student body, Reid entered teaching after years as a theater technical director.

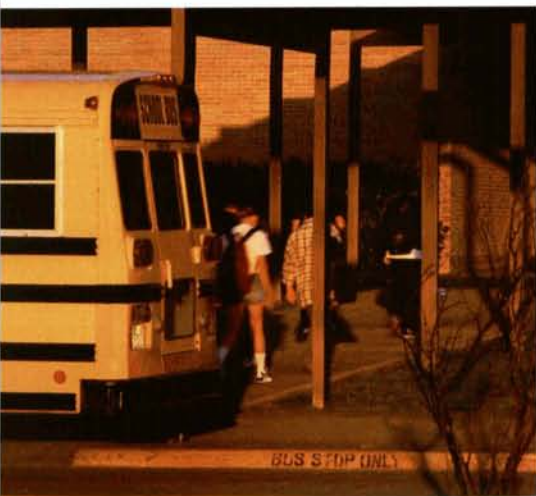
SALARIES, SUPPLIES, AND THE ELECTRIC BILL: WHO PAYS?

In addition to bake sales, car washes, and door-to-door candy bar sales, Oklahoma schools are principally funded through three sources.

By far the largest source of funding (approximately 70 percent) comes from the state of Oklahoma itself. Sixty percent of that is appropriated annually through the state legislature, while the remaining 10 percent is derived from taxes on county mineral extraction, vehicle tags and registration fees, an assessment on rural electric cooperatives, and interest from the state School Land Trust, a \$1 billion trust fund managed for the benefit of the state's public education system.

In fact, the School Land Trust is one of the largest landowners in Oklahoma. Its five-member board of commissioners oversees the management of some 750,000 acres and another million acres in mineral rights deeded to Oklahoma by the federal government at statehood. Income derived from leasing the land is put into the trust, and the interest is doled out to school districts on a monthly basis.

The second major source of school funding, around 23 percent, is local and county property taxes and local bond issues, while the remaining seven percent of the school funding pie is federal grant money targeted at specific programs.



STEVE SISNEY/THE DAILY OKLAHOMAN

"It was a huge difference when it got down to twenty-one," she says. "My ability to teach one-on-one and to truly know what the individual students needed was so much better."

Crowder says that although 1017 did raise teacher salaries and establish core curriculum requirements for all grade levels, class size reduction remains its greatest legacy, marking Oklahoma as an education trendsetter.

"Oklahoma was one of the first states in the nation to do that," says Crowder. "Now there are national class size requirements in the new federal legislation, but we did it ten years ago."

Education again came to the forefront of state politics in 2000, when House Bill 2653 granted teachers a \$3,000 across-the-board raise, the largest in state history. A subsequent bill, H.B. 2728, increased core curriculum requirements by mandating that all high school students be on an ACT core curriculum of four years of language arts and three years each of math, science, and social studies by 2003.

Earlier this year, the state legislature, facing the worst budget shortfall since the oil bust in the 1980s, held education budget cuts for fiscal year 2003 to just 1.6 percent while virtually every other state agency was enduring reductions closer to 5 percent. Not

only that, but this year lawmakers also passed House Bill 1968, which will eventually pay 100 percent of teachers' health insurance.

"I believe that it's solidified in the minds of legislators that education does draw industry and business into the state, that we're not going to grow as a state unless that belief manifests itself in everything we do," Garrett says.

However, there is another, more urgent reason why legislators are willing to keep education funding viable: Oklahoma is hemorrhaging teachers, new graduates and seasoned veterans alike.

"Only 35 percent of the teachers who get their education here actually stay in-state to teach," says Crowder. "Oklahoma is becoming a feeder state for all the states around us that offer more money. We've got this great reputation for producing high-quality teachers."

Trouble is, we can't keep them here.

OKLAHOMA TEACHERS ARE IN THE unenviable position of being considered among the nation's best, while their pay is among the lowest. Depending on what organization is doing the ranking, Oklahoma consistently ranks near the top in teacher quality surveys (fifth in the nation, according to *Education Week* newspaper) yet ranks anywhere from



Rallying around the State Capitol is an impressive way for Oklahoma teachers to lobby for education changes in the state. Approximately 15,000 educators gathered at the capital, below, on May 13, 1979, to hear lawmakers discuss education funding. A February 2002 rally, left, was held in support of a \$3,000 raise for teachers. The bill approving the raise was later signed by Governor Frank Keating.



THE DAILY OKLAHOMAN

forty-fourth to dead last in average teacher pay.

Whatever the true numbers, both teachers and teacher-starved surrounding states are getting the same message: Oklahoma is a great place to get a job...somewhere else.

School districts near the state line habitually fall victim to cross-border recruiting raids. Some out-of-state school districts are even resorting to television ads to lure away state teachers, as the Dallas school district did this summer with a Tulsa and Oklahoma City area ad campaign. The district touts signing bonuses and a starting salary over \$7,000 higher than Oklahoma's \$27,060 base salary.

"How can you compete with that?" asks Robert Neel. "The answer is, you can't, especially here in Guymon. We're in a thirty-five-mile-wide strip of land situated directly between two states that pay their teachers much more."

Neel says both states have local funding structures that give school districts the ability to pay teachers whatever it takes to recruit and retain them. "We're just now getting 75 percent health insurance coverage. People are feeling good about that, but I'm still losing teachers to districts in Texas and Kansas."

"We've had a huge problem recruiting Spanish-speaking teachers," Neel says. "We've

ACCORDING TO NEEL, SCHOOL DISTRICTS THAT WANT TO SEE WHERE THEY'LL BE IN 20 YEARS NEED ONLY LOOK TO GUYMON NOW.

had ESL [English as a second language] positions open for eighteen months before we could find someone to fill them."

That's why some see alternative teacher certification as an increasingly popular option for school districts facing teacher shortages.

"It's a trend of necessity," says Sandy Garrett. "While most teachers will come in through the traditional route, there are opportunities for people coming into teaching through the route of a second career."

Of course, teacher shortages are in part a function of funding, and to that end, both school districts and the communities they serve are beginning to explore alternatives and supplements to traditional funding processes.

While local vending contracts and programs like Channel One, in which schools receive free video equipment in return for requiring students to watch a certain amount of commercial programming each day, are viable sources of funding for some schools, the concept of school/municipality partnerships

is rapidly gaining prominence.

In Oklahoma City, it's called MAPS for Kids, and those in the education business say its impact won't be limited to the metro area.

The Oklahoma City plan passed by voters last year calls for a temporary sales tax designed to raise \$500 million to be combined with a \$180 million bond issue. The money generated by the plan will not only build seven new schools and renovate sixty-five others, it will also fund academic reforms designed to improve student performance.

Carolyn Crowder believes it is something other cities in Oklahoma will be looking at as funding becomes more critical.

"It's already happened in Lawton, and they're considering it in the Ardmore area," she says. "It's a departure from the norm. It's city government taking responsibility for its schools, recognizing that the better their schools are, the better their city's going to be economically and in terms of quality of life."

MAPS FOR KIDS: THOSE IN THE EDUCATION BUSINESS SAY ITS IMPACT WON'T BE LIMITED TO THE METRO AREA.

ANOTHER MAJOR FUNDING SOURCE for Oklahoma schools isn't even technically a funding source, but it has saved school districts so much money it may as well be. It is also part of the reason why, when it comes to technological achievement in the classroom, Oklahoma is on the good side of the digital divide.

"The federal E-rate program has really transformed school Internet access," says Dr. Phil Applegate, executive director for instructional technology and telecommunications at the Oklahoma State Department of Education. "Before its implementation, less than 30 percent of the state's districts had Internet access. Now the vast majority of districts have T-1 [high-speed] access."

Formally known as the Schools and Libraries Universal Service Fund, the E-rate program was created in 1996 as part of the Telecommunications Act. In a nutshell, the program gives discounts on telecommunications services for all schools and libraries.

More important is the program's inverse funding formula, which gives the lion's share of discounts to schools with low-income students. The more poverty-level students, the higher the discount. As a result, Oklahoma has one of the highest E-rate participation rates in the nation, as well as one of the highest average discount rates at 75 percent.

According to Applegate, Oklahoma schools and libraries have received more than \$165 million in discounts through five years of the program.

"The E-rate program came along at the perfect time," says Applegate, "right when technology was transforming both our society and our schools. When used appropriately, that technology holds much promise for the future."

Judging by the numbers, it has much promise in the present, as well. The results of a recent school technology survey conducted by the state department of education reveal that 99.8 percent of state school districts have Internet access, 97 percent of districts have computer labs, 93 percent of elementary and middle school classrooms have computers, and 96 percent of high school classrooms have computers, remarkable numbers when weighed against Oklahoma's per-pupil spending ranking of forty-fifth in the nation.

Some Oklahoma schools are even taking that technology off the desktop and into the field, and in the process, they may be redefining how future students will learn.

A pilot project now in progress at three Putnam City schools is a striking example of just how sophisticated the current school environment can be.

Thanks to a \$1.25 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education and help from Representative Ernest Istook in procuring it, students at two Putnam City middle schools and freshmen and sophomores at Putnam City West High School will be supplied Palm handheld computers for their class work.

"This is a method for bringing technology into the classroom," says Linda Parsons, curriculum integration specialist for the Putnam City school district. "The philosophy is that as long as access to a computer is down the hall or up the stairs, kids won't utilize it as much. This is 24/7 access."

Parsons says the computers are not as complex to use but offer a tremendous amount of computing power.

"The students have small, portable keyboards for word processing and computing, as well as attachable probes that will allow them to measure and record real-time data like water quality and air temperature, then bring that data back into the classroom and analyze it," Parsons says.

There are no Palms at Salyer Elementary School in Guymon.

"I've got the highest poverty-level school in the district," says Aubrey. "And it's a whole different ball game when you're teaching poverty-level students, so we had to approach things a little differently."

Aubrey instituted a reading program developed through Johns Hopkins University, a program which works well with impoverished, transient students.

"We try to get their reading level up as quickly as possible," says Aubrey. "So we do a lot of one-on-one tutoring and small group instruction from the bottom up."

Since 76 percent of the children at Salyer go home each night to Spanish-speaking parents, the school district and the state education department obtained federal grant money to place an adult education program at the Seaboard Farms pork processing plant in Guymon, the county's largest employer of immigrant workers.

"When we went to the Guymon schools, we were particularly interested in the projects they were using with Hispanic children to teach them English," says Sandy Garrett. "These children were



Students prepare for Halloween at Salyer Elementary School in Guymon, above. Left: Classrooms have gone high-tech with handheld Palms in the Putnam City School District in Oklahoma City.



learning English so quickly, but the teachers were telling us they were going home to Spanish-speaking parents. We decided to put one of our adult education programs in the plant so parents could learn English between shifts."

The results of both language programs demonstrate how the school system is slowly but surely overcoming language and funding barriers.

"In the past four years, we've gone from being classified as an 'at-risk' school with extremely low test scores to raising our scores enough to get out of that category," says Aubrey. "Our attendance rate is up to 98 percent, and our mobility rates are dropping. People are beginning to buy houses and become permanent residents."

Aubrey says teachers are also beginning to identify more gifted and talented Hispanic students, children who otherwise might have fallen through the cracks. Those students then receive advanced instruction.

"It's always going to be a challenge teaching these kids," Aubrey says. "But it's our job to educate them. I think we're finally starting to achieve some success."

AS DEMONSTRATED IN GUYMON, the problems of teacher shortages, funding woes, and changing demographics will continue to challenge the state, but despite that, most educators agree that Oklahoma continues the trendsetting pattern first seen with H.B. 1017.

"I certainly think Oklahoma is a trendsetter," says Garrett. "We'll continue to be a trendsetter in the future."

As examples, Garrett says Oklahoma was the first state in the nation to create an anonymous toll-free violence hot line for students and to require that student drivers be able to read at an eighth-grade level before they can get a driver's license.

Garrett says that after the law, dubbed "Driven to Read," was enacted, Oklahoma's eighth-grade reading scores jumped eleven points in two years.

But it's in the area of school testing, says Garrett, where Oklahoma has taken a national lead with its Academic Performance Index, a scoring system designed to rank all Oklahoma public schools based on a combination of factors, including test scores,

graduation and dropout rates, and how much college prep course work is offered.

"This is where we're really ahead of the game," says Garrett of the testing program. "Many other states haven't begun to address this yet, but we've already done it."

School rankings, alternative certification, technology: All are emerging trends in education. But in the end, educational success is determined not by trends but by the old-fashioned interaction of teacher and student.

Jo Ann Webb, a sixth-grade teacher at Lawton's Brockland Elementary School and the Lawton Public Schools' 2002-03 Teacher of the Year, says that interaction is what she and all other teachers strive for.

"I don't want any student leaving my classroom feeling they've gotten less than 100 percent of what I have to offer," says Webb, "and if they haven't, then I have to find a way to change that."

That adaptability, says Webb, will be even more crucial for teachers in the near future, as projected funding shortages translate into larger class sizes.

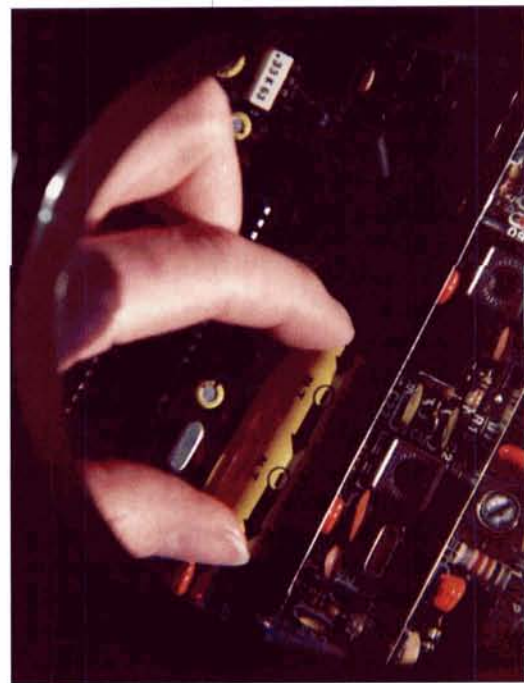
"In teaching, class size is everything," says Webb. "Larger class sizes mean less individual attention, and the students who really suffer are the ones who are at grade level but just need that extra bit of help. The good thing is that Oklahoma teachers are some of the best in the country, and I think we'll overcome that."

Despite the sea changes that education has undergone in the past two decades, at its most fundamental level, the future of education in Oklahoma differs little from its past or its present.

In Guymon, the proof of that is evident in the way the school system's basic mission hasn't changed, even as its environment and constituency has.

"The transition in Guymon has been successful, and it continues to be successful," says Robert Neel. "It's been a difficult one, but the things we're doing are working. We're seeing these kids participating in school activities, and they're beginning to excel in class. That's why we're here." **OKT**

Chad Love is a writer living in Woodward. His wife, Jo Lynn, is a schoolteacher. This is his first time to report on the subject of education.



SKILLS OF THE TRADE: CAREER TECH AS ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

One facet of Oklahoma's public education system that is generally regarded as one of the finest in the nation is the state's expansive career tech system.

Formerly known as vo-tech, career tech is designed to give students and adults alike the education and skills necessary to succeed in a wide variety of industrial and technological trades.

"Our career tech system is an important part of our public education system," says Sandy Garrett, Oklahoma's superintendent of public instruction. "The two programs work very well together."

First established in 1917, the vo-tech system originally offered only agriculture and home economics courses but has steadily expanded. It now offers course work not only in the traditional blue-collar trades but in business education, health care, marketing, and computer technology, to name just a few.

Considered by many to be a significant part of Oklahoma's economic development, last year the career tech system enrolled 133,000 high school students and more than 300,000 adults in its programs.

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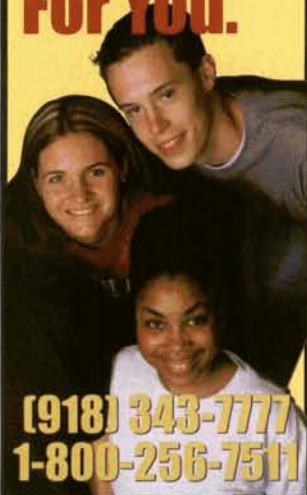
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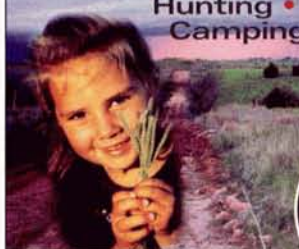
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Wheatheart Festival



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October 26th**

**Olde Tyme
Christmas
Celebration**



December 5th

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It's been said, "Image is Everything", which is why our tenants include many of Tulsa's most prestigious companies, including:

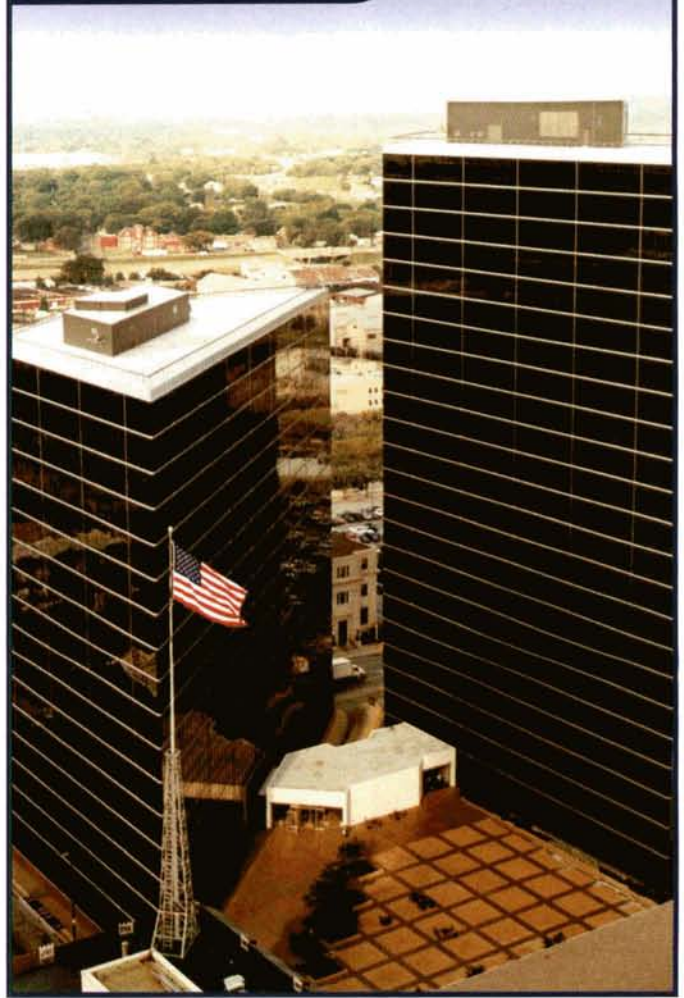
- **American Electric Power**
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- **AFN Communications**
- **BSW International**
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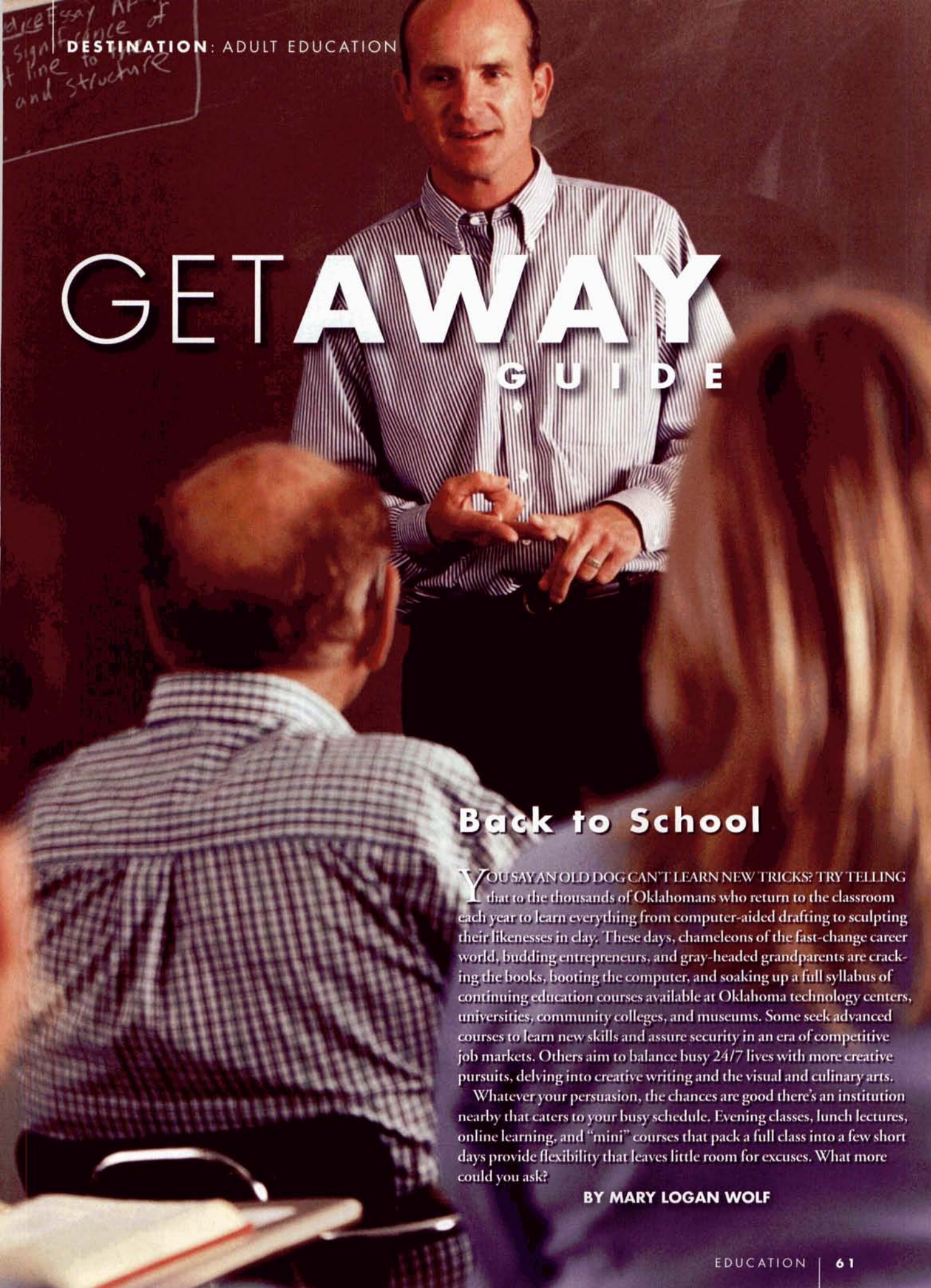
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DESTINATION: ADULT EDUCATION

GET AWAY

GUIDE

Back to School

YOU SAY AN OLD DOG CAN'T LEARN NEW TRICKS? TRY TELLING that to the thousands of Oklahomans who return to the classroom each year to learn everything from computer-aided drafting to sculpting their likenesses in clay. These days, chameleons of the fast-change career world, budding entrepreneurs, and gray-headed grandparents are cracking the books, booting the computer, and soaking up a full syllabus of continuing education courses available at Oklahoma technology centers, universities, community colleges, and museums. Some seek advanced courses to learn new skills and assure security in an era of competitive job markets. Others aim to balance busy 24/7 lives with more creative pursuits, delving into creative writing and the visual and culinary arts.

Whatever your persuasion, the chances are good there's an institution nearby that caters to your busy schedule. Evening classes, lunch lectures, online learning, and "mini" courses that pack a full class into a few short days provide flexibility that leaves little room for excuses. What more could you ask?

BY MARY LOGAN WOLF

OU - Oklahoma's Academic Flagship

- The University of Oklahoma ranks in the top five in the nation among all comprehensive public universities in National Merit Scholars enrolled per capita and in the graduation of Rhodes Scholars.

- Almost 10 percent of OU's freshman class ranks in the top one-half of 1 percent in the nation in SAT and ACT scores.

- OU's private endowment is in the top 25 public university endowments in the nation. It has almost tripled since 1994.

- Due to OU's increased private support during the past five years, the number of endowed faculty positions has tripled from 100 to 340.

- OU's five-year Reach for Excellence Campaign raised over \$514 million and was one of the largest fund-raising campaigns in U.S. history conducted by a public university. It expanded OU's contributor base from 17,000 to over 73,000 in six years.

- OU ranks first among the Big 12 universities in the growth of federal research funding. OU's research and training programs have grown twice as fast as the national average over a 10-year period, according to a survey by the National Science Foundation.

- OU's \$10 million strategic alliance with The Williams Companies will enhance weather and climate research, technology development, and undergraduate and graduate meteorology education. This arrangement is the largest of its kind in the United States between a private

corporation and a university meteorology program. It also has created the most extensive super computing capability in the Big 12 at OU.

- OU ranks first in the Big 12 and at the top in the nation in international exchange agreements with countries around the world. The university has 134 student exchange agreements with universities in more than 50 countries. OU has students from over 100 countries on the Norman campus.



The Harold Powell Garden welcomes visitors to the University of Oklahoma's North Oval with the late Allan Houser's "May We Have Peace" sculpture.

- Last semester, 288 OU student athletes earned a 3.0 grade point average or higher. Sixty of those students earned a perfect 4.0 grade point average.



- OU had 102 student athletes named to Academic All-Conference teams during the 2001-2002 academic year and, while this year's roster is not yet complete, last year 14 OU student athletes earned Academic All-America honors.

- OU is home to one of the two largest natural history museums in the world associated with a university. The Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History has more than 5 million artifacts and contains 198,000 square feet on 60 acres of land. The museum exhibits include the largest Apatosaurus on display in the world and the oldest work of art ever found in North America.

- OU's Weitzenhoffer Collection of French Impressionist paintings, the single most important gift of art ever given to a U.S. public university, will be displayed in the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art's new Howard and Mary Lester wing, scheduled to begin construction this summer. The collection, which was a bequest from Clara Weitzenhoffer, includes works by Van Gogh, Monet, Renoir, Gauguin, Pissarro, and Vuillard. The wing is named in honor of the chairman of the board of the San Francisco-based Williams-Sonoma Inc. and his wife.

- The \$62 million National Weather Research Center to be built on OU's Norman campus will be the largest weather research center of its kind in the nation. It will house OU's world-famous and highly regarded School of Meteorology as well as top weather research specialists of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



Thousands of mums bloom on the South Oval of the OU campus in the Pitman Parterre with Bizzell Memorial Library in the background.

The University of Oklahoma is an equal opportunity institution.

OU - A Pacesetter For Excellence

Community Minded

One institution equals lots of learning on the four campuses of **Tulsa Community College** (918/595-7000; tulsa.cc.ok.us). TCC offers continuing education in photography, writing, personal and professional development, and small business. Check out the online noncredit learning opportunities such as creative writing and desktop publishing.

Oklahoma City Community College (405/682-1611; okccc.edu) bills itself as a leader for health technology and professional programs. With a number of state universities, OCCC offers fast-track, weekend, morning, and evening college credit courses in six academic divisions. Telecourses let you soak up learning from the comfort of your couch.



The Artist's Way

It seems we never outgrow the desire to throw a little paint around. Satisfy your aesthetic cravings at the **Oklahoma City Museum of Art** (405/236-3100; okcmoa.com), located in its new digs in downtown Oklahoma City. Designed to accommodate working and senior adults, the Museum School offers evening studio art and classes in art and film history and art appreciation.

For renaissance tastes, don't miss the hands-on classes and workshops for both children and adults at the **Philbrook Museum of Art** (918/749-7941; philbrook.org) in Tulsa. Museum spokesperson Cheryl Waldeck says classes work within the framework of the museum's holdings. "Students may be sketching in the gallery and developing it into something more three-dimensional, based on specific pieces in a collection." For busy adults, the museum offers short courses on weekends and a popular life drawing class throughout the year.

For renaissance tastes, don't miss the

A NEW VOCATION

Oklahoma's technical training is tops in the country, with cutting-edge programs on fifty-four campuses. **Tulsa Technology Center** (918/828-5100; tulsatech.com) offers three hundred part-time programs ranging from chemical laboratory technology to motorcycle servicing and several certification programs. Located at four sites in Tulsa County, Tulsa Tech's adult courses range from half-day to ten weeks in length.

In Oklahoma City, **Francis Tuttle Technology Center** (405/717-7799; francistuttle.com) lives up to its name by capturing a significant niche of the e-learning market. For learners over sixty, the center's two northwest Oklahoma City campuses offer reduced-rate Golden Agers courses and have a variety of short-term courses in areas like culinary arts, child care, and investment and financial planning.



JOHN HALL

CONSORTIUM?

Easy for You to Say

Working adults and traditional college students can pick from a variety of undergraduate, upper-division, or graduate courses offered through the **Downtown College Consortium** (405/232-3382; downtowncollege.com) in Oklahoma City. Founded in 1995, the consortium represents Oklahoma City Community College, OSU-OKC, Redlands Community College, Rose State College, and the University of Central Oklahoma and offers classes that meet over the lunch hour and after work. Ongoing noncredit courses cater to personal interests like yoga, tai chi, landscaping, sign language, and business and investment strategies. Classes meet in the First National Center.



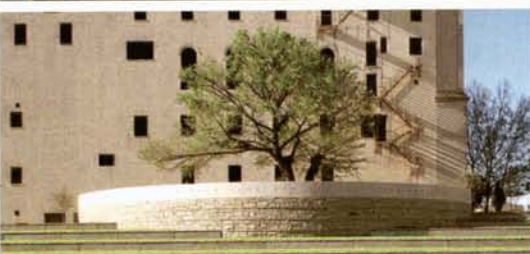
EXTENDING A HAND

The long arm of Oklahoma's first land-grant university reaches into every county. The historic mission of Oklahoma State University spells out its commitment to helping Oklahomans improve their lives while boosting the state's economic productivity. The result is **OSU Cooperative Extension Service** (405/744-6606; okstate.edu).

Through county extension offices, adults gain access to educational opportunities ranging from horticulture and landscape courses to owning and operating a home-based business. Programs vary by county, so contact your local extension agent for information.



We come here to remember those who were killed,
 those who survived and those changed forever.
 May all who leave here know the impact of violence.
 May this memorial offer comfort, strength, peace, hope and serenity.©



The site of one of the worst terrorist attacks on American soil
 is now a place of remembrance and education.

Symbolic Memorial grounds are open 24-hours a day, seven days a week.
 There is no charge to tour the Memorial grounds.

Memorial Center museum hours:
 Monday – Saturday..... 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
 Sunday 1 p.m. – 6 p.m.
 Ticket sales stop one hour prior to closing.

Admission:
 Adults.....\$7
 Seniors.....\$6
 Students.....\$5
 Children 5 & Under.....No charge

A GUIDE TO ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS STATEWIDE

ARDMORE

Downtown Main Street. Oct 3-5, Children's Sidewalk Chalk Art Contest. Oct 5, Armadillo Chili Cook-off. (580) 226-6246

Lake Murray Resort I-35, Exit 24 East. Sept 1-2, Labor Day Celebration. Oct 31, Halloween Costume Contest. (580) 223-6600

BARTLESVILLE

Community Center Adams Blvd. & Cherokee Ave. Sept 7, Pops Picnic. Sept 13-15, Indian Summer Festival. Oct 7, Community Concert Association with Richard Glazier. Oct 12, Symphony Orchestra. (918) 337-2787

Window on the West Sept 1-Oct 6, Price Tower Arts Center. (918) 336-4949

Tulsa Regional Fly-In Sept 20-21, Frank Phillips Field. (918) 622-8400

Heart of Town Open Air Market Sept 28, Oct 5, 12, Downtown. (918) 336-9100

BROKEN ARROW

Community Playhouse 1800 South Main St. Sept 6-15, Red, Hot, and Cole. Oct 18-19, 24-27, Ten Little Indians. (918) 258-0077

Craft & Antique Benefit Bazaar Oct 26, Clarence Oliver Middle School. (918) 251-0617

CHECOTAH

Downtown Sept 14, OkraFest. Oct 30-31, Haunted House. (918) 473-2070

Honey Springs Battlefield 1863 Honey Springs Battlefield Rd. Sept 28-29, Battle of Honey Springs Reenactment. Oct 19, Civil War Life. (918) 473-5572

CLAREMORE

Expo Center 400 S Veterans Parkway. Sept 5-7, Bluegrass & Chili Festival. (918) 342-5357. Sept 13-15, Rogers County Fair. (918) 341-2736

The Cowboy Trade Day Sept 21, Will Rogers Roundup Club Arena. (918) 341-6985

DUNCAN

World's Largest Garage Sale & Fall Fest Sept 13-14, Fuqua Park. (580) 255-3644

Southwest Oklahoma Senior Games Sept 19, Simmons Center. (580) 252-2900

Lawton Dog Fanciers Dog Show Oct 26-27, Fairgrounds. (580) 255-0510

EDMOND

Macbeth Sept 1, Hafer Park. (405) 340-1222

Stitches in Time Quilt Exhibit Sept 3-Oct 31, Edmond Historical Museum. (405) 340-0078

Hello, Dolly! Oct 3-6, Mitchell Hall. (405) 974-3375

ELK CITY

Flying Aces Fly-In Sept 14, 200 Cedar Ave. (580) 225-2253

Fall Festival of the Arts Sept 21-22, Civic Center. (580) 225-0207

Jerry Kirk Memorial Fiddlers' Convention Oct 24-26, Holiday Inn. (580) 225-4363

ENID

Garfield County Fair Sept 8, Fairgrounds. (580) 237-0238

Cherokee Strip Days Celebration Sept 12-14, Downtown. (580) 237-2494

Cherokee Strip Land Run Sept 13, Museum of the Cherokee Strip. (580) 237-1907

Pumpkin Patch Sept 28-Oct 31, Christ United Methodist Church. (580) 242-2725

Cherokee Strip Railroad Association Swap Meet Oct 19, Emmanuel Baptist Church. (580) 242-8508

Cherokee Express Oct 26, 702 N Washington. (580) 233-3051

GUTHRIE

Oklahoma Int'l Bluegrass Festival Oct 3-5, Cottonwood Flats Campground. (405) 282-4446

Guthrie Shootout Jackpot Oct 25-31, Lazy E Arena. (405) 282-3004

Halloween Handouts Oct 31, State Capitol Publishing Museum. (405) 282-1889

KINGFISHER

Chisholm Trail Museum & Seay Mansion 605 Zellers Ave. Sept 21, Oct 19, Shuttle Bug Tattling Workshop. Sept 26, Dutch Oven Cooking. Oct 12, Luncheon & Victorian Fashion Show. (405) 375-5176

Fairgrounds 300 S 13th Street. Sept 6-7, Horse Show & Free County Fair. Oct 12, Victorian Fashion Show and Luncheon. (405) 375-3822

LAWTON

Bugling Elk Tour Sept 15, 19, 21-22, 26, 28-29, Oct 3, 5-6, 10, 12-13, Wichita Mountains Nat'l Wildlife Refuge Headquarters. (580) 429-3222

International Festival Sept 27-29, Library Plaza. (580) 581-3470

MIAMI

Designs of Autumn Fall Festival Sept 20-21, Main Street. (918) 542-4481

Ottawa Celebration & Powwow Sept 30-Oct 1, Adawe Park. (918) 540-1536

The Great Boo Ha-Ha Oct 31, Main Street. (918) 542-1590



CULTURAL ART

Native American faces are showing up around every corner at the Gilcrease Museum of Art in Tulsa. The museum, best known for its impressive collection of western art, is in the final months of a special exhibit featuring Native American photography. The *Native American Invitational* exhibition, which runs through October 13, celebrates photography as a fine art medium and a tool for documenting contemporary community life.

The exhibit, on display since late July, includes images from across the state that illustrate the diverse heritage the Native American culture brings to Oklahoma. *Invitational* photographers represent a number of tribes including Kiowa, Osage, Cherokee, Muscogee, Yuchi, Comanche, Pawnee, and Delaware.

"The exhibit is diverse and offers inside perspectives that haven't been shared with the public," says Kevin Smith, interpretive projects manager for Gilcrease.

As a part of the *Invitational*, Gilcrease curators have juxtaposed photographs from the museum's permanent collection to give historical context to the newer images on display. The collection also include computer-manipulated images.

"We have seen the Native American art that makes us proud of our Oklahoma culture," says Smith, "but these photographs break new ground while still reaffirming the best of tradition."

Just one in a series of Native American exhibits, Gilcrease is proud of its promotion of Native American photography, and Smith is excited about the future of the cultural art.

"I have a feeling this is the tip of the iceberg," he says.

—Andrea Lopez Walker

The exhibit runs through October 13. Gilcrease Museum of Art is located at 1400 Gilcrease Museum Road in Tulsa. (918) 596-2700 or gilcrease.org.

NORMAN

Cleveland County Fairgrounds 615 E Robinson. Sept 4-7, Cleveland County Free Fair. Oct 5, Creative Craft Festival. (405) 360-4721

Firehouse Art Center 1313 Mockingbird Lane. Sept 6-Oct 6, Student Show I. Oct 11-31, Student Show II. (405) 329-4523

Lake Thunderbird State Park South Side at Clear Bay. Sept 1, Laid-Back Labor Day. (405) 321-4633. Oct 11, Dutch Oven Cooking for Beginners. (405) 321-4633. Oct 12, Little Axe Fall Festival. (405) 329-6135

Quilt Show Sept 21-22, Cleveland County Historical Museum and Montford Inn. (405) 321-0156

OKLAHOMA CITY

The Blue Door 2805 N McKinley Ave. Sept 21, Roy Bookbinder. Sept 28, Terry "Buffalo" Ware and Friends. Oct 19, Vance Gilbert. Oct 25, Ray Wylie Hubbard. Oct 26, Kate Campbell. (405) 524-0738

Myriad Botanical Gardens Downtown. Sept 19, Out of Africa Lecture. Oct 12-31, Vanishing Amphibians: Endangered Plant Series. Oct 26, Creepy Conservatory. (405) 297-3995

National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum 1700 NE 63rd St. Sept 1-8, Prix de West Invitational Exhibition. Sept 28-Oct 31, Traditional Cowboy Arts Association Exhibition & Sale. Oct 12-31, Mountain Family Spirit: The Arts & Culture of the Ute Indians. Oct 16-18, Academy of Western Art Workshops. (405) 478-2250

Omniplex 2100 NE 52nd St. Sept 1, Basils and

Scented Geraniums. Sept 1, Gardening for Butterflies and Hummingbirds. Sept 1, Small Shrubs & Ground Covers. Sept 1, Symphony in Red. Sept 1-2, Everest. Sept 1-Oct 1, Images of the Infinite. Sept 1-Oct 17, To Be an Astronaut. Sept 1-Oct 18, Oklahoma's Place in Space. Sept 1-Oct 31, Robotix: Build the Adventure. (405) 602-6664

State Fair Park I-44 & NW 10th St. Sept 6-13, Grand Nat'l Morgan Horse Show. Sept 13-29, 96th Annual Oklahoma State Fair. Oct 18-20, Mistletoe Market Arts and Crafts. Oct 25-27, An Affair of the Heart. Oct 27-31, US Team Roping Championships. (405) 948-6700

Sticks and Stones Sept 1-8, Oklahoma Children's Theatre. (405) 951-0003

United Road Rally Sept 4, Oklahoma City National Memorial. (405) 503-5568

Telematic Connections: The Virtual Embrace Sept 5-Oct 31, Oklahoma City Museum of Art. (405) 236-3100

Antiques Show & Sale Sept 27-29, Cox Business Services Convention Center. (405) 232-7575

Lou Rawls Concert Oct 4, Civic Center Music Hall. (405) 297-2264

Race for the Cure Oct 5, SBC Ballpark. (405) 232-2873

Haunt the Zoo for Halloween Oct 26-31, Oklahoma City Zoo. (405) 424-3344

PONCA CITY

Country Harvest & Craft Festival Sept 6-7, Hutchins Auditorium. (580) 765-9746

Cherokee Strip Bar-B-Que & Chili Cook-off Sept 14, Lew Wentz Campground. (580) 761-2010

Fine Arts Festival Sept 21-23, Art Center. (580) 765-9746

Standing Bear Powwow Sept 27-28, Standing Bear Park. (580) 762-1514

Oktoberfest Oct 5-6, Marland Mansion Grounds. (580) 762-1462

SHAWNEE

Pottawatomie County Fair Sept 4-7, Heart of Oklahoma Expo Center. (405) 598-2273

Jazz Festival Sept 21, Downtown. (405) 273-1080

Kite Festival Sept 21, Shawnee Airport. (405) 878-0375

Sacred Heart Century Sept 28, St. Gregory's University. (405) 878-5290

STILLWATER

Bikes & Blues Festival Sept 27-28, Community Center. (405) 747-8003

Chamber of Commerce Fall Mixer Sept 30, Payne County Expo Center. (405) 372-5573

Brown Swiss Sales Oct 17-19, Payne County Expo Center. (405) 377-1275

TAHLEQUAH

Cherokee National Holiday Sept 1, Cherokee Tribal Grounds. (918) 456-6007

Illinois River Cleanup & Fair Sept 6, Eagle Bluff Campground. (918) 456-3251

Kanuchi Festival Oct 18-20, Downtown and Cherokee Heritage Center. (918) 456-6007

TULSA

Expo Square 21st & Yale. Sept 5-8, Clothing Sale. Sept 6-8, Antiques Show. Sept 8, College Connection. Sept 26-Oct 6, Tulsa State Fair. Oct 26-27, Rock & Mineral Show. (918) 744-1113

Performing Arts Center 101 E 3rd St. Sept 11, Philharmonic Presents In Memoriam: America Remembers. Sept 13-14, Isla St. Clair. Sept 21-22, 25-28, The Importance of Being Earnest. Sept 30, Jordan & Israel. Oct 4, 5, The Lion, the Witch & and the Wardrobe. Oct 11, 12, Martin Hayes & Dennis Cahill. (918) 596-7111

Philbrook Museum of Art 2727 S Rockford Rd. Sept 9-Oct 31, The Gilded Age Exhibition. Sept 16-Oct 31, American Drawings Exhibition. (918) 749-7941

Tulsa Zoo & Living Museum 5701 E 36th St. N. Sept 1-Oct 6, Butterflies: Wings of Wonder. Sept 7, ZooFest. Oct 12, ZooRun. Oct 28-31, HallowZOOeen. (918) 669-6600

Cherry Street Farmer's Market Sept 1-Oct 27, 15th St & S Peoria. (918) 587-8958

Capitol Portraits Exhibition Sept 1-Oct 31, Gilcrease Museum. (918) 596-2700

Backdoor Cajun Music Festival Sept 6-7, Downtown. (918) 583-2617

Festival Hispano Sept 13-15, Plaza Santa Cecilia. (918) 664-5326

Iris Sale Featuring Beardless Iris Sept 14, Tulsa Garden Center. (918) 746-5125

6th Annual Miniature Show & Sale Sept 14, Elks Lodge. (918) 335-0100

Oklahoma Scottish Games & Gathering Sept 21-22, Chandler Park. (918) 499-2585

Celebration of Books Sept 28, Brady Theater. (918) 594-8215

CANOEING AT PENNINGTON CREEK

The granite rocks are warm with sun
The water cool and green
The red canoe a blazing blot
On nature's muted screen.

Squirrels scream and fuss as I pass by
A hawk soars through the air
The horsetails hide the creek's far shore
Sweet wind tangles my hair.

A post oak, tall and gnarled with age
Lies low over the creek
I duck and feel a rough green leaf;
Alone, yet not alone.

All nature bids me welcome
So far from my own home
I smile and feel accepted;
Alone, yet not alone.

—Rachel Henry

Art in the Square Oct 5, Ulica Square Shopping Center. (918) 742-5531
Oktoberfest Oct 17-20, River West Festival Park. (918) 596-2001
America's Best Cheer & Dance Competition Oct 19, Tulsa Convention Center, (214) 948-5552
Tulsa Run Oct 26, Downtown. (918) 587-8786

WYNNEWOOD

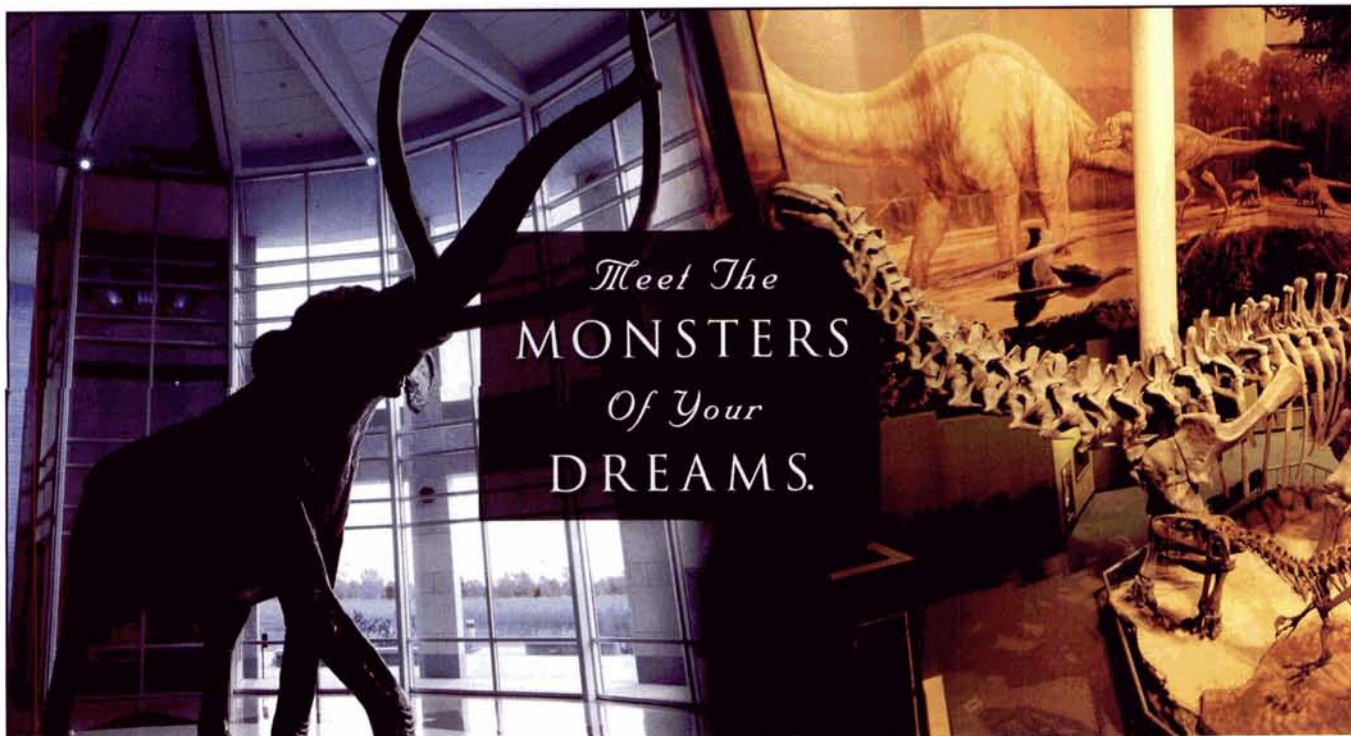
Pat Kinard Memorial Labor Day Shuffleboard Tournament Sept 1-2, Full House Tavern. (405) 665-2715
Bluegrass Festival Sept 12-14, Arbuckle Mountain Park. (405) 665-5226
Nightmare at Exit 64 Oct 19-20, I-35 Exit 64. (405) 665-5197

OUT AND ABOUT

ALINE Sod House Labor Day Open House, Sept 2, Sod House Museum. (580) 463-2441
ALLEN Fall Festival, Sept 21, Downtown. (580) 857-2687
ALTUS Cotton Pickin' Chili Cook-off, Oct 5, Downtown Courthouse Square. (580) 482-2277
ANADARKO Tonkawa Hills Blues Festival, Sept 14, Indian City USA. (405) 247-6665
ANTLERS Antlers Springs Golf Course SW of City. Sept 2, Labor Day Boy/Girl Golf Tournament. Oct 12, Spooky Goofy Golf Tournament. (580) 298-9900

ARCADIA Festival & Rodeo, Sept 1, Municipal Park. (405) 396-2899
ATOKA County Fair, Sept 10-14, Fairgrounds. (580) 889-7337
BILLINGS Wheat Country Festival, Sept 21, Main Street. (580) 725-3610
BLACKWELL Kay County Free Fair, Sept 10-14, Fairgrounds. (580) 363-4195
BRAGGS Fishing Clinic, Sept 14, Greenleaf State Park. (918) 487-7125
BROKEN BOW Safe-n-Sane Halloween, Oct 31, Downtown. (580) 584-2440
CACHE Comanche Nation Fair, Sept 27-29, Comanche Nation Complex. (580) 492-4988
CADDO Heritage Days, Oct 18-19, Downtown. (580) 367-2798
CARNEGIE Canna Festival, Sept 28, Citywide. (580) 654-2121
CHEYENNE Pioneer Day, Sept 14, City Park. (580) 497-2106
CHOCTAW Oktoberfest, Sept 5-7, Old Germany Restaurant. (405) 390-8647
CLARITA Amish Auction & Craft/Antique Sale, Sept 14, Ben Troyer Farm. (580) 428-3458
CLEARVIEW Trail Ride, Oct 26, Rodeo Arena. (918) 605-0955
CLEVELAND Annual Pioneer Day, Sept 21, Downtown. (918) 358-2131
CORDELL Pumpkin Festival, Oct 12, Downtown. (888) 267-3355
CROMWELL Bill Tilghman Day Festival, Oct 12, Downtown. (405) 944-5317

CUSHING Festival in the Park, Oct 12, Memorial Park. (918) 225-0561
DAVIS Arts & Crafts Show, Oct 5-6, Turner Falls. (580) 369-2402
DEL CITY Oklahoma Country Music Association Jubilee, Sept 15, Oct 20, Country Western Museum Hall of Fame. (405) 677-6107
DEL CITY Bluegrass Music Concert, Oct 5, Kerr Jr. High School. (405) 677-1509
DEWEY Citywide Garage Sale, Sept 21, Downtown. (918) 534-0610
EL RENO Heritage Fest, Oct 12, Downtown. (405) 262-8888
EUFULA Fishing Tournament, Sept 20-22, Fountainhead Resort. (918) 689-7751
FAIRVIEW Annual Threshing Bee, Sept 27-29, Major County Complex. (580) 227-2265
FORT COBB Drag Boat Race, Sept 7-8, Fort Cobb Lake State Park. (405) 262-7758
FORT GIBSON Fall Encampment & Mexican-American War Symposium, Oct 4-6, Fort Gibson Historic Site. (918) 478-4088
FORT SUPPLY Cavalry Day, Oct 5, Fort Supply Historic Site. (580) 766-3767
FREDERICK Tillman County Free Fair, Sept 5-7, Fairgrounds. (580) 335-2515
GORE Fin & Feather Fall Festival, Sept 27-29, Fin & Feather Resort. (918) 487-5148
GROVE Pelican Festival, Sept 27-29, Civic Center & Pelican's Landing. (918) 786-2289
HEAVENER Annual Quilt Show, Oct 12, Peter Conser Historic Site. (918) 653-2493



The new Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History, Norman

Many of the Earth's largest creatures shook these Native Lands. Now, they welcome modern man to the nation's largest university-based natural history museum. Free Oklahoma Travel Guide: 1-800-652-6552 or travelok.com

OKLAHOMA
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KENTON Fall Rendezvous, Oct 4-6, Outlaw Canyon. (580) 426-2412
KONAWA Annual Band Day, Oct 5, Citywide. (580) 925-3244
LANGLEY National Hook 'n Cook-off, Sept 28, City Park. (918) 782-3214
MANGUM Greer County Free Fair, Sept 5-7, Fairgrounds. (580) 782-5502
MICLOUD Fall Festival, Oct 12, Sixth & Park. (405) 964-6566
MIDWEST CITY Global Oklahoma: A Festival of Cultures, Oct 5, Rose State College. (405) 736-0313
MUSKOGEE Masters Art Show, Oct 6-31, Five Civilized Tribes Museum. (918) 683-1701
MUSTANG Western Days & IPRA Rodeo, Sept 6-7, Rotary Park. (405) 376-2758
PARK HILL Ghost Stories, Oct 25-26, George M. Murrell Home. (918) 456-2751
PAWHUSKA Osage County Free Fair, Sept 5-7, Fairgrounds. (918) 287-4170
PERRY Cherokee Strip Celebration, Sept 15, Cherokee Strip Museum. (580) 336-2405
POTEAU Fall Farm Fest, Oct 11-12, Overstreet-Kerr Historical Farm (918) 966-3396
PRAGUE Fall Festival & Quilt Show, Sept 12, Downtown. (405) 567-3932
PRYOR DAM J.A.M. & Bicycle Tour, Sept 14, Whitaker Park. (918) 825-0157
RENTIESVILLE Dusk 'Til Dawn Blues Festival, Sept 1, Down Home Blues Club. (918) 473-2411
ROFF Oktoberfest, Oct 12, Main Street. (580) 456-7774

SAND SPRINGS Labor Day Festival, Sept 1, River City Park. (918) 246-2561
SAYRE Main Street Fair & Expo, Oct 6, Downtown & Main Street. (580) 928-2514
SENECA Eastern Shawnee Tribal Powwow, Sept 20-22, Eastern Shawnee Tribal Complex. (918) 666-2435
SHATTUCK Heritage Festival, Oct 4-6, Downtown. (580) 938-2818
STROUD Motorcycle Against Cancer (MAC) Rally, Sept 8, Main Street. (918) 366-7617
SULPHUR Antique Tractor & Implement Show, Sept 20-22, Tractor Rd. (580) 622-6611
TALIHINA Ride the Ouachitas, Sept 20-21, Talimena State Park. (918) 567-3434
TISHOMINGO Chickasaw Festival, Sept 28-Oct 5, Pennington Park. (580) 371-2040
TONKAWA Wheatheart Festival, Oct 26, Blinn Park. (580) 628-2220
TUTTLE Friends & Family Reunion, Sept 14, Elementary School. (405) 381-4600
VINITA Big Country Weekend, Sept 14, Fairgrounds. (918) 256-7133
WAKITA Old Settlers Celebration, Sept 14, Main Street. (580) 594-2200
WATONGA Cheese Festival, Oct 11-12, Downtown. (580) 623-5452
WAURIKA Jefferson County Fair, Sept 6-8, Fairgrounds. (580) 228-2332
WEATHERFORD Fit Fest, Sept 28, FBC Family Life Center. (580) 772-7744
WETUMKA Sucker Day Festival, Oct 19, Downtown. (405) 452-3237

WEWOKA Sorghum Day Festival, Oct 26, Downtown. (405) 257-5485
WILBURTON Robbers Cave Fall Festival, Oct 18-20, Robbers Cave State Park. (918) 465-3400
WOODWARD Fall-a-Days, Oct 18-20, Fairgrounds. (580) 256-4101
YUKON Czech Festival, Oct 5, Citywide. (405) 354-3567

For more listings, visit our website at oklahomatoday.com.

Dates and times are subject to change; please confirm before attending any event. The events guide is a free service published on a space-available basis. To be considered, please mail a notice of the event that includes date, place, address, and both a contact telephone number and a phone number that can be published. Notices must arrive at Oklahoma Today three calendar months prior to publication (i.e. January/February events must arrive by October 1). Send to: Events Guide, Oklahoma Today, P.O. Box 53384, Oklahoma City, OK 73152 or fax: (405) 522-4588 or eventsguide@oklahomatoday.com. We cannot take listings over the telephone.

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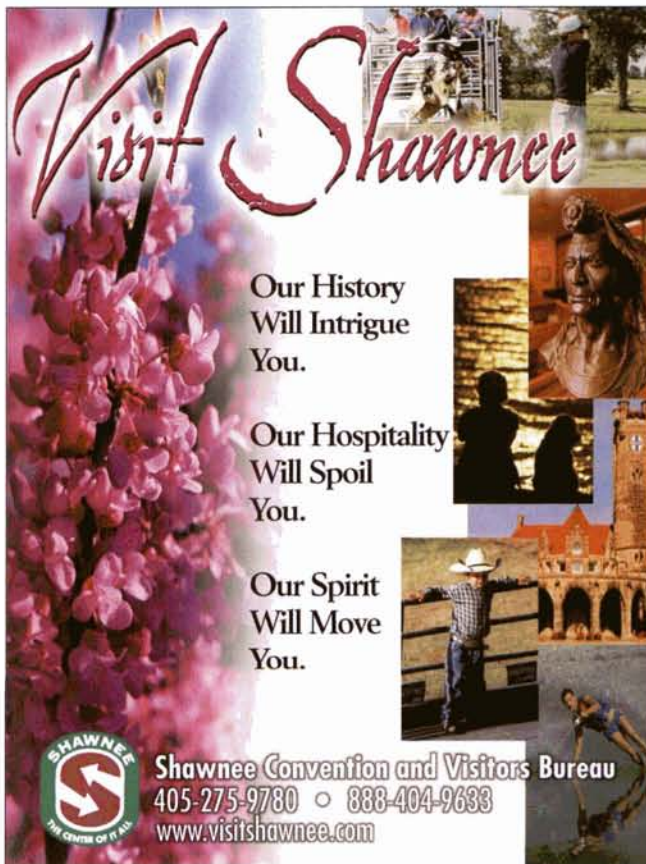
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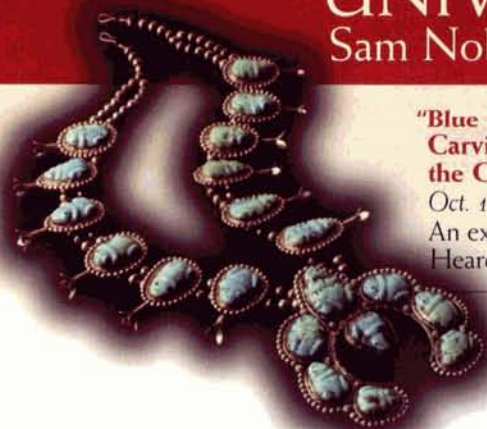
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COURTESY OF DALE MOSES

Author Dale Moses, top row, second from left, attended Stovall School from the second through eighth grades. The one-room school was located southeast of Lexington.

Old School

I STOOD AT THE BLACKBOARD, CHALK IN HAND, trying to hold back tears of embarrassment and shame. The entire second grade, all four of us, stood there as Mrs. Ray read arithmetic problems for us to solve. "Twelve plus twenty-three." I was a brand-new student at Stovall School, a one-room frame building housing grades one through eight.

At my last school, we had learned to read some, spell a little, and add single numbers. For me, twelve plus twenty-three might as well have been college trigonometry.

Mrs. Ray, a large lady of a certain age, had ruled the school for several years and maintained a strict and unvarying discipline. A few of the seventh and eighth graders were strong, big boys well into their teens. Keeping those rambunctious lads controlled required strength and determination. Mrs. Ray had sufficiency of both.

She sent the others to their desks and, sensing my distress, came to the board and worked me through my first lesson in advanced addition. Lessons were never harder than they were on that first day.

The following year, Mrs. Ray retired. Our new teacher, Mrs. Whited, had little in common with her predecessor. She was tiny, blonde, and young, probably no more than twenty-three. Some parents doubted her ability to manage

and control us. She laid those doubts to rest in short order.

I remember watching her confront a boy who stood a head taller and outweighed her by twenty pounds. She backed him into a corner, put a finger in his face, and informed him in clear terms that his disobedience would keep him at his desk through every recess and noon hour break for the entire school year. He got the message.

Petite Mrs. Whited, through the force of her personality, kept us subdued and orderly through the years she taught at Stovall. She also saw to it that we could read, write, spell, and work arithmetic problems at every grade level. How she managed to convey all this to every child, in every grade, every year, remains a source of wonder to me to this day.

Mrs. Whited also did the janitorial work. She carried in the coal and built the fire on cold winter days. She brought in the galvanized bucket that was the source of our drinking water. She played the piano for us and directed the entertainment at our annual pie suppers and Christmas pageants.

I finished the eighth grade in the spring of 1946, starting at the big high school in Lexington that fall. My first day, I went to the blackboard and worked a math problem, confident and able. A little piece of my mind said, "Thank you, Mrs. Ray. Thank you, Mrs. Whited." —Dale Moses



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